

# Nicola Sturgeon address at Stanford University on Scotland's place in the world

Below is a speech given by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon at Stanford University, California. Check against delivery.

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## Bill to introduce first new Welsh tax in 800 years is passed

Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford said the passage of the Land Transaction Tax and Anti-avoidance of Devolved Taxes (Wales) Bill marked a significant step in Wales' devolution journey.

Land transaction tax, which will replace stamp duty land tax, will come into effect on April 1, 2018. The revenue raised will help to fund public services in Wales.

The tax will be payable on the purchase or lease of a building or land in Wales over a certain price and includes a higher rate on additional residential properties – the higher rate has been payable in Wales through stamp duty land tax since April 2016.

In 2015-16, £153m was raised from stamp duty land tax in Wales, with just under 59,000 transactions taking place. This is expected to rise to £263m by 2018-19.

The Finance Secretary will announce the rates and bands for land transaction tax by October 1 and the regulations will be laid after the UK Autumn Budget.

Welcoming the passing of the Bill by the National Assembly, Professor Drakeford said:

“This is a significant milestone in devolution – for the first time in almost 800 years Wales will have its own taxes.

“This is a tax which affects so many of us. Once law, the Bill will enable us to introduce a land transaction tax to replace stamp duty land tax, ensuring public services in Wales will continue to benefit from the revenues raised by this important tax.

“We consulted widely in developing the tax and were able to learn from the devolution of the tax to Scotland. While the new tax provides consistency and stability for businesses and provides a smooth transaction for home buyers, we have been able to make a number of improvements to the tax reflecting Welsh needs and priorities.”

Land transaction tax is one of two taxes to be devolved to Wales in April 2018 – landfill tax will be replaced with a landfill disposals tax. The Landfill Disposals Tax (Wales) Bill is currently being considered by the National Assembly.

Professor Drakeford added:

“The devolution of tax powers in a year’s time will change the nature of devolution in Wales. It brings with it additional responsibility for the Welsh Government and National Assembly and a chance to make a real difference to public services in Wales.”

The Land Transaction Tax and Anti-avoidance of Devolved Taxes (Wales) Bill is expected to receive Royal Assent (when the Bill becomes an Act) in May 2017.

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## **Press release: UK triples support for action against landmines on 20th anniversary of Princess Diana’s iconic Angola visit**

The UK will dramatically increase its support for demining, tripling the amount of UK aid supporting action against landmines.

Speaking at a Kensington Palace event hosted by Prince Harry to mark the 20th anniversary of Princess Diana’s iconic visit to the minefields of Angola, International Development Secretary Priti Patel today announced a package of support to make safe the equivalent of over 20,000 football pitches and help 800,000 people live their lives free from the threat of mines.

Speaking at the event, Ms Patel highlighted the “global scourge of landmines” that led to a “destruction of opportunity and hope”.

She spoke of Global Britain’s “historic role in tackling the indiscriminate and lethal legacy of landmines” and highlighted how the efforts of her Royal

Highness, Diana, Princess of Wales brought landmines to the world's attention 20 years ago and led to international action.

The Department for International Development will support global efforts to tackle landmines through a £100 million UK aid package over the next 3 years.

**International Development Secretary Priti Patel said:**

Landmines are a global scourge that destroy opportunity and hope. We do not have to accept this.

Global Britain has had a historic role in tackling the indiscriminate and lethal legacy of landmines, but there is still more to do. Our new support will make safe the equivalent of over 20,000 football pitches and help 800,000 people live their lives free from the threat of mines.

It is for causes like this that we have made our commitment to the overseas aid budget. This is just one of the many ways that UK aid is making the world safer, healthier and more prosperous for us all.

**UK action on mines:**

- The UK's work removes and destroys landmines, but also focuses on education to ensure the local community is aware of the risk.
- The UK was a founding signatory of the Mine Ban Treaty and a number of UK organisations such as Mines Advisory Group (MAG) and the Halo Trust are at the forefront of global efforts to make the world mine-free.
- With concerted effort we can make a real difference. Through the support of UK aid, Mozambique was declared mine-free in 2015, joining 26 countries that have completed mine clearance in the past 20 years.
- More than 60 million people still live with the daily threat of injury or death and the basic rights of safe access to health services, education, agricultural land and infrastructure continue to be denied to communities around the world.

**Notes to editors:**

1. The Mine Ban Treaty, signed in 1997, is one of the world's most widely accepted treaties: over 80% of the world's countries are parties to it.
2. Collectively, states party to the treaty have destroyed more than 51 million stockpiled antipersonnel mines and cleared nearly a thousand square kilometres of mined areas. In 2015 the only states to lay landmines were Syria, North Korea and Burma.

3. Yet more remains to be done. More than 60 million people still live with the daily threat of injury or death. In 2015 alone almost 5,000 people were injured and over 1,600 killed by landmines or other explosive devices left behind by conflict. Three quarters of those were civilians; more than a third were children.
  4. The basic rights of safe access to health services, education, agricultural land and infrastructure continue to be denied to communities around the world.
  5. The £100 million includes committed programmes in Afghanistan and DFID's Global Mine Action programme totalling £6.25 million in 17/18. New funding includes an extension of the Global Mine Action programme for £8.1 million in 17/18, plus a new programme of at least £85 million which will be allocated later this year to take funding up to 2020.
  6. [Read Priti Patel's full speech from tonight's event.](#)
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## **Speech: Priti Patel: Speech at Landmine Free World 2025 event**

Your Royal Highness, ladies and gentlemen – good evening to you all.

We are here tonight because we recognise that landmines are a global scourge that must be tackled.

There are no boundaries as to who mines hurt and inflict suffering on, these are indiscriminate weapons of war that maim and kill, long after the fighting has stopped.

But ultimately, mines hurt the poorest hardest, in the very places where people are already marginalised and excluded.

Tonight we are saying, on behalf of the men, women and children around the world who live in places where they fear to tread, more must be done, and more will be done.

### **Destruction of opportunity and hope**

I have seen the efforts to tackle this threat first hand.

In Afghanistan more than 5 million people live with the risk of landmines,

And earlier this year I visited a Halo Trust Centre in Kabul where this great bastion of British expertise train local people, often husband and wife teams, to decontaminate land and educate communities about the risks of mines.

Words simply can't pay sufficient tribute to how meticulous, painstaking and amazingly brave they are in carrying out this inherently risky work.

And I was deeply moved to meet these men and women, from communities that have been devastated by decades of war.

Even now the fighting has stopped, the land around them remains a deathtrap; parents live in constant terror for their children.

They dread their child being killed or suffering a life-changing injury. Because of course in these very poor communities people who are disabled or psychologically harmed by landmines simply can't access the kind of support they need to even contemplate what their future might hold.

In the end it's not just the fatalities and the terrible, immobilising injuries landmines cause – it's the destruction of opportunity and hope, that has scarred so many families.

## **The legacy of Diana, Princess of Wales**

But it doesn't have to be like this – Global Britain has a historic role in tackling the indiscriminate and lethal legacy of landmines.

That role was, of course, embodied by the efforts of His Royal Highness' late Mother, Diana, Princess of Wales.

Twenty years ago she brought landmines to the world's attention with her courageous walk through an Angolan mine field, and in direct response the world came together to sign the Mine Ban Treaty – now one of the world's most widely accepted treaties – 162 countries have joined it.

The UK was one of the founding signatories to this treaty and since then we have become one of the world's leading donors on mine action.

In the last 3 years alone, the UK – working through partners like Halo and the Mines Advisory Group – cleared land from mines equivalent to over 4,500 football pitches.

It is fair to say that these achievements would not have happened without the late Princess' global advocacy on this highly neglected issue.

## **Another landmine emergency**

But 20 years on from the historic Ottawa Treaty the world faces another landmine emergency. Landmines are once again being used as a weapon of war in places such as Syria and Yemen.

In 2015 alone almost 5,000 people were injured and over 1,600 people were

killed by landmines and other explosive devices left behind by conflict – including hundreds of children.

This is more casualties than we have seen for a decade.

A large part of this is down to Daesh who are cynically using mines to directly target civilians, especially those who want to return home after fleeing the conflict and Daesh's regime.

We cannot and will not accept this.

We have a moral duty to act – and it is in our national interest to act.

Britain is committed to shining a light once again on the human side of the damages these devices bring,

And to giving a voice and hope to those wounded and physically and mentally broken by conflict and mines.

So this evening I can announce that the UK will triple our funding for mine action over the next three years, taking our total spend to £100 million over the next three years.

This will allow us to clear 150 square kilometres of contaminated land.

We will work in countries such as Afghanistan, Somalia, South Sudan and Cambodia – helping to deliver real and lasting peace and stability in these places.

And by doing so we will honour the work of those who have come before us and provide hope to future generations.

It is for causes like this that we have made our commitment to the overseas aid budget.

This is one of the many ways that UK aid can, and is, making the world safer, healthier and more prosperous for us all.

It is my sincere hope that by working together we can once again focus the world on this vital, but still under reported and under invested in issue.

I am in no doubt that where Britain leads, others should follow.

Through the enduring support of UK aid, we will bring hope to so many places where there has been despair.

And ensure that millions more people can go about their lives, no longer fearing to tread.

Thank you.

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## Speech: “Darfur will remain unstable and unpredictable so long as the root causes of conflict remain unaddressed.”

Thank you Madam President,

Allow me to begin by stressing my condolences to the representative of the Russian Federation for the terrorist attack in St. Petersburg yesterday that was such a senseless loss of life. I would also like to wish you Madam President all the very best for your month in the hot seat and many thanks for your kind words about last month. And I would also like to congratulate the Joint Special Representative Kingsley. A very warm welcome and congratulations on your appointment and thank you for the briefing that you have just given us.

Madam President, Darfur is at a crossroads. Down one path lies continuation of 14 years of conflict, 14 years of bloodshed, impunity. It's a path that has forced 2.6 million people from their homes. It's a path littered with persistent violations of international humanitarian law, human rights violations and abuses, and persistent sexual and gender based violence. And it's a path, simply, that Darfur has been on for too long.

But there is another road to take. In recent months, we have seen a welcome absence of violence between the Government of Sudan and opposition groups. We've seen UNAMID granted access to areas previously cut off. Vital humanitarian assessments are now underway.

So today we need to send a clear message to the Government of Sudan; choose the right path. Choose the path that will improve the lives of the people of Darfur, choose the path to sustainable peace.

This means tackling the culture of criminality and banditry in Darfur. It means ending the abundance of small arms and light weapons which are only adding fuel to the fire. And it means bringing to justice, domestically and through the International Criminal Court, all those who have carried out violence, all those who have failed to respect international humanitarian law and human rights, no matter their allegiance, no matter their links to the government.

In truth, Darfur will remain unstable and unpredictable so long as the root causes of conflict remain unaddressed. So let us all encourage the Government of Sudan to use the current cessation in violence to shift its efforts away from counter-insurgency and towards building a sustainable peace. They will need the support of this Council and the international community as a whole

as they do so.

The first step has to be political. A political agreement between the parties to the armed conflict would not only secure a permanent cessation of hostilities, but would also be a significant step towards addressing the drivers of intercommunal violence. So we call upon all parties to the armed conflict to engage meaningfully with the African Union High Level Implementation Panel peace process to secure a political agreement.

The second step towards a long term solution is long term access to Darfur. In order for UNAMID to fulfil its mandated duty to protect civilians, the mission requires unfettered access throughout Darfur, not just for a few days, or even for a few weeks, but on a sustained basis. The recent access is welcome, but it will count for little if it is not maintained.

We are concerned that Government of Sudan security agencies continue to impose unnecessary access restrictions on UNAMID. This is particularly troubling when the mission is prevented from accessing vulnerable populations of the internally displaced and those most in need. So let us insist today that UNAMID is given unrestricted access throughout Darfur to enable the mission to fulfil its mandate effectively.

And this brings me to my final point. As pen holder here in New York on the UNAMID Mission, we believe that if there is to be sustainable peace in Darfur, UNAMID must evolve alongside the security situation. The strategic review will be crucial in this respect, and we welcome the Government of Sudan's help for the visit by the Strategic Review team to Darfur. We're encouraged that they could visit all five states, including areas previously denied, such as Golo and Nertiti in Jebel Marra.

However, if UNAMID is to be adapted as we hope, we all need to be confident that the Government of Sudan is willing and able to protect its civilians in areas where UNAMID's presence is altered. This needs more than just unfettered and reliable access; it requires the Government of Sudan to commit to the principle of operational flexibility for UNAMID and to commit to improving its own ability to protect civilians.

In conclusion, Madam President, until the Government and parties to the conflict take these steps, Darfur will remain at that crossroads. The people of Darfur cannot afford a wrong turn; they have suffered for too long. It is incumbent upon us all to ensure that the path chosen is the right one; the one that will improve the lives of civilians and lead to sustainable peace.

Thank you.