



PRESS RELEASE

No: 777/2018

Date: 8th December 2018

MINISTER CORTES AT OVERSEAS TERRITORIES' MEETINGS IN LONDON

While the Chief Minister continued his high level meetings and media appearances in London, Minister for Education, Environment and Climate Change John Cortes was representing Gibraltar at the UK Overseas Territories' Joint Ministerial Council (JMC) in Lancaster House. This followed the UK Overseas Territories Association Political Meeting held at Church House in Westminster.

Chief Ministers, Premiers and other senior political leaders and officials, and Governors, from all fourteen UK Overseas Territories attended the JMC and related meetings over three days. The meeting was chaired by the Minister for the Overseas Territories, Lord Ahmad. Despite the activity during the week in the Westminster Parliament, a number of UK Ministers personally attended the JMC. These included EU exit Minister Robin Walker, Financial Secretary to the Treasury Mel Stride, Environment Minister Therese Coffey and Minister of the Constitution Chloe Smith. Senior officials included Lindsay Appleby and Ben Merrick from the FCO.

A wide range of issues was discussed, including Brexit, the Environment, Disaster Response, Financial Services and Safeguarding.

Heads of Delegation also attended the Queen's annual reception for the Diplomatic Service at Buckingham Palace, attended by Her Majesty and other members of the Royal Family.

During his time in London, Minister Cortes, accompanied by Gibraltar's UK Representative Dominique Searle, met at 10 Downing Street with the Prime Minister's Environment Advisor, Lord Randall. At this meeting, the Minister who is co-chair of the OT Environment Ministers' Forum, raised environmental issues relating to Gibraltar as well as wider Overseas Territories environmental matters.

The Minister also attended a workshop on Funding and the Environment organised by the UK Overseas Territories Association (UKOTA) where he formed part of a panel of experts together with academics and representatives of NGOs and funding organisations, and attended the Chief Minister's briefing to the All Party Parliamentary Group in the House of Commons.

Commenting on the visit, Minister Cortes said, "It is important to keep in close contact with our friends in the other Overseas Territories. While we are all very different, we can certainly learn from and support each other in many of the areas that we discussed. The fact that senior UK Ministers attended the sessions shows that the UK Government's support for all the Territories is greater than it has been before."