



PRESS RELEASE

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Rail Forum welcomes HM Trade Commissioner to Africa

Rail Forum was delighted to welcome John Humphrey, HM Trade Commissioner to Africa to Clayton Equipment in Burton upon Trent yesterday. The visit was arranged as part of a wider 'Africa roadshow' that included meeting leading UK universities and export champions and as the first step in a new collaboration between Rail Forum and the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) specifically focussing on countries in Southern Africa.

His Majesty's Trade Commissioner for Africa, John Humphrey said:

"Africa is home to some of the world's fastest growing markets, it is a diverse, vibrant, innovative, and abundant continent, offering a vast array of opportunities for UK businesses looking to export and invest in the continent.

"It has been great meeting businesses from across the whole of the UK this week to hear about their success and provide those thinking about starting their exporting journey with the tools and advice they need."

Chief Executive of Rail Forum, Elaine Clark said: "We are working closely with colleagues in DBT on a framework between ourselves and the [Southern African Railway Association](#) which would strengthen access for UK rail companies into the southern African rail industry. The framework aims to enable UK suppliers, governmental departments, financiers and related agencies (such as the [Rail Forum](#)) to further align the UK offering based on related infrastructure projects in Africa.

"This initial meeting with HM Trade Commissioner provided a valuable opportunity to discuss the support needed to encourage and facilitate greater co-operation between UK rail and southern Africa. It also allowed us to showcase what one company, Clayton Equipment, is doing in the overseas market and we are grateful to Clive and his team for hosting us today."

Ian Harrison, Head of Export Development - Midlands, at DBT said: "There are significant synergies between the traditional strengths of businesses in the Midlands region and the major areas of opportunity within Africa, with total exports from the Midlands to Africa amounted to £947 million making up 14.3% of total UK goods exports.

"The opportunities that Africa presents in the rail sector, play well to both our regional strengths and sectoral expertise. This afternoon's meeting between the Rail Forum and HMTC John Humphrey, is an invaluable milestone towards greater collaboration and insight between UK rail and Africa and another step forwards in our Race to a Trillion."

Clive Hannaford, Managing Director of Clayton Equipment said: "Clayton Equipment were very proud to host the visit from HM Trade Commissioner to Africa. As a worldwide supplier of zero emission locomotive haulage equipment the visit allowed us to showcase the investment in new technology which the company is making to provide sustainable environmental benefits to meet the demand of the African market. We look forward to working with the DBT to further strengthen our relationship with companies in Southern Africa."

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Notes to Editors

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Race to a Trillion: UK exports are due to hit £1 trillion annually by the mid-2030s, but we want to hit that mark before then and are aiming for the end of the decade. DBT's export strategy - Made in the UK, Sold to the World sets out a range of support for both new and existing exporters that will accelerate that race and grow our economy through exports. Increased support is targeted here in the Midlands, a region in which exports account for over £45bn or 20% of the UK's total, and we are continually expanding our global footprint in support of levelling up. Here in the Midlands, as a result of levelling-up funding, we have regional overseas specialists located in key international markets, like Africa, who actively support our regional businesses in high growth sectors to win business.

For further information and support contact DBT: ditmidlands@trade.gov.uk

About the Rail Forum

The Rail Forum is a national industry body with strong regional connections including supporting the nationally and internationally important rail supply chain cluster across the Midlands; the Rail Forum has 360 members providing products and services across all aspects of the industry. The Rail Forum actively supports the national rail agenda and strategy, encouraging collaboration, promoting members' capabilities, leading a number of regional skills initiatives and supporting innovation and export priorities. The Rail Forum is owned and governed by its members with a Board drawn from member companies.

www.railforum.uk

About Clayton Equipment

Clayton Equipment Limited is a UK based Locomotive manufacturer specialising in bespoke locomotives. In business for over 90 years, Clayton Equipment is now the only independent locomotive manufacturer in the UK capable of designing and manufacturing locomotives from 1.75 tonnes to 150 tonnes. The company 'lead the way' in offering low emission, environmentally friendly rail locomotives to a worldwide market.

<https://claytonequipment.co.uk>