

UK aid to double efforts to tackle climate change

The UK will double its investment to help developing countries turn the tide against climate change and species loss.

The announcement to double the UK's international climate finance (ICF) spend will be made by the Prime Minister Boris Johnson today at the UN General Assembly in New York.

ICF refers to UK aid support given to poorer countries to deal with the causes of climate change, like preventing deforestation and reducing carbon emissions, and to prepare for its effects, like giving poor farmers climate-resilient crops that can grow in hotter, drier conditions, or implementing early-warning systems in areas vulnerable to flooding.

The new Ayrton Fund launched by the Prime Minister today is an example of the UK's ICF's investment. The Fund will give British scientists and innovators access to up to £1 billion of aid funding to create new technology to help developing countries reduce their emissions and meet global climate change targets.

This announcement means the UK will up its ICF support to at least £11.6 billion over the next five years, between 2021/22 to 2025/26. This represents a doubling of the UK's commitment to spend at least £5.8 billion on tackling climate change to 2021, announced ahead of the landmark Paris meeting, COP21, in 2015.

The impacts of climate change will be felt most severely in the developing world, where 100 million people could be pushed into poverty by climate impacts as soon as 2030, according to the World Bank. This significant uplift in UK aid support will help developing countries pursue low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable development.

Addressing the climate summit at the UN General Assembly, the Prime Minister is expected to say:

Today we are not only raising our ambitions for the level of action we will take by 2030 – I am pleased to announce that the UK is also committing to double its spend on international climate finance so that other nations can act too.

International Development Secretary Alok Sharma said:

The effects of climate change are being seen all around the world. We have to act now. Doubling our support will benefit the world's poorest countries, preserve our vital biodiversity and protect our

planet.

Business and Energy Secretary Andrea Leadsom:

As the first major economy to legislate to end our contribution to carbon emissions, the UK is leading the world in taking in action on climate change. Doubling our support for International Climate Finance, supporting initiatives including accelerating the take up of low-carbon technologies, is all part of our plan to go further, faster.

We will continue to work closely with other countries to step up global action ahead of crucial UN climate talks in the UK next year.

This funding will go towards UK aid projects, including:

- accelerating the development of low carbon technologies and the shift from fossil fuels to clean energy, such as replacing wood-burning stoves and kerosene used by millions of the world's poorest families with sustainable and more reliable sources like solar mini-grids;
- protecting forests and mangroves, which act as vital carbon sinks;
- creating new protected areas and restoring degraded ecosystems, like abandoned land, which were once home to forests, mangroves and other precious habitats;
- helping countries and communities most vulnerable to the damaging effects of climate change to become more resilient and prepare for its impacts, including supporting early warning systems in poor communities vulnerable to extreme weather events like droughts or floods which can give people extra hours, days or even weeks to prepare for an impending humanitarian crisis or disaster; and
- providing smallholder farmers with 'super crop' varieties that are adapted to grow in higher temperatures, can withstand droughts or floods, and have natural resistance to pests and diseases, developed specifically for the most vulnerable countries in Asia and Africa.

The 2015 Paris Agreement represented a landmark shift in the fight against climate change. All countries pledged to reduce their emissions, aiming to limit global warming "to well below 2 degrees". This was matched by a commitment from developed countries to mobilise at least \$100 billion a year of climate finance for developing countries.

The Paris Agreement established that every five years countries would make new commitments to reduce their emissions and countries would make pledges on their provision of climate finance, this £11.6 billion is the UK contribution to the \$100 billion goal for the next five year period.

The UK is working together with other countries to scale up action on climate change, ahead of hosting crucial UN climate talks in Glasgow next year.

Earlier this month, the Department for International Development published ICF results which showed UK aid supported climate projects delivered by DFID, BEIS and Defra in the last eight years have:

- Provided 26 million people with improved access to clean energy, including those previously living without reliable electricity in the poorest communities in Kenya, Rwanda and Malawi.
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions internationally by 16 million tonnes – the equivalent to taking three million cars off the road for a year..
- Helped 57 million people to cope with the effects of climate change – from supporting poor farmers to grow climate resilient crops, to preserving water in areas facing an increased drought risk, and investing in systems to help save communities vulnerable to extreme flooding and other impacts of climate change.

Today (Monday 23 September) the UK committed the following – which will come from the ICF increase:

- up to £1 billion for the Ayrton Fund to go towards the development and testing of new technology targeted at tackling climate change to help developing countries reduce their emissions and meet global climate change targets.
- £30 million to support the UK's continued work with countries including Indonesia, Ghana and Liberia, to help stop deforestation by tackling illegal logging and helping to promote the legal timber trade.
- £9.6 million for a Just Rural Transition programme, to help poor farmers in developing countries make their agricultural practices more eco-friendly, while protecting the land that they are farming.