

UK PM addresses Financing for Development event via video: 28 May 2020

The Prime Minister Boris Johnson today addressed a virtual high-level event on “Financing for Development in the Era of Covid-19 and Beyond”, convened by the UN Secretary-General and the leaders of Canada and Jamaica.

The event aimed to galvanise international action to address six major financing challenges: liquidity; boosting external finance to support jobs and growth; debt; private sector credit; illicit financial flows; and ensuring a sustainable recovery from the pandemic.

It builds on the Prime Minister’s commitment to support the resilience of vulnerable countries and drive the global economic recovery from the coronavirus crisis. The UK will now lead a global workstream on ensuring an inclusive and sustainable recovery.

Speaking via a recorded video from 10 Downing Street, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

I’m grateful to Secretary-General Guterres, Prime Minister Trudeau and Prime Minister Holness for bringing us together at this vital moment.

As we meet today, we face the greatest health crisis of our lifetimes.

Every government is striving to protect our respective peoples, and that is exactly as it should be. Yet no single country holds the keys to victory against our invisible enemy.

If we are to defeat COVID-19, achieve a global recovery and avoid a future pandemic, then we must work together across borders. Our national efforts will count for little unless they are fortified by international cooperation.

Today, the most urgent tasks are to stabilise the world economy and develop a vaccine. Britain has contributed over £700 million – almost \$1 billion – to the international response.

We are the largest single donor to the efforts of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness to find a vaccine.

We’ve provided up to £150 million to the IMF to help developing countries cope with the economic impact.

But once we move beyond the emergency phase, we owe it to future generations to build back better and base our recovery on solid foundations, including a fairer, greener and more resilient global economy.

The UK will take this forward by hosting the UN Climate Change conference in Glasgow next year.

There is no need to reinvent the international system or renegotiate existing agreements; but there is every need for us to work together to get our shared goals back on track, including the expansion of girls' education, the Paris climate change targets, the Sustainable Development Goals, and our financing of development.

And though we are witnessing a tragedy that has touched every one of us, I believe that we can look to the future with buoyancy and hope.

In the year I was born, the World Health Organisation created a Smallpox Eradication Unit, designed to rid humanity of a scourge that claimed about 300 million lives in the 20th century alone. Just 13 years later, this international campaign achieved complete success and the world defeated smallpox.

Only a few months ago, before the pandemic struck, we stood on the brink of a similar victory against polio.

None of these advances would have been possible without this great organisation, the United Nations, which strives to represent the combined genius and resolve of humanity.

Our predecessors overcame terrible evils and they were at their best in moments of adversity.

As we face our own time of adversity, I believe that we can come through this crisis and achieve a strong, green and fair recovery, if we show the same generosity and breadth of spirit that should always animate the United Nations.