

PM call with UN Secretary-General: 11 January 2021

Press release

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The Prime Minister spoke to the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres today, to mark the 75th anniversary of the first UN General Assembly in London.

He reiterated the UK's long-standing commitment to multilateralism and the rules-based international order, remembering the long service of renowned British diplomat Brian Urquhart to the United Nations as a model for the UK's global outlook.

They discussed the leadership of the UN and UK in driving action on tackling climate change and committed to working together to deliver a successful COP26 Summit in Glasgow in November.

The PM and Secretary-General welcomed progress on the COVAX vaccines procurement pool, but shared concerns about the fractured approach the international community has taken to dealing with Covid-19 and agreed on the need for greater coordination.

They also discussed the crises in Yemen and Libya and the prospects for peaceful resolution, noting ongoing challenges and opportunities for progress.

The Prime Minister warmly welcomed the Secretary-General's decision to run for a second term and congratulated him on a successful first term.

He invited Secretary-General Guterres to attend the G7 leaders' summit hosted by the UK later this year, as well as the Global Partnership for Education replenishment event.

Developing a holistic response to humanitarian challenges in the Sahel and West Africa

Thank you Mr President. I would like to thank Special Representative Chambas for his briefing today and for his ongoing work over the past six months, during the terrible security and humanitarian challenges across the region. The United Kingdom will continue to work with UNOWAS and the countries in the region to form a well-calibrated and holistic response.

Mr President, the United Kingdom also welcomes the largely peaceful elections and strong voter turnout last year in Burkina Faso, Niger and Ghana. And we remain concerned by the violence and tension which have marked some elections in the region. And we encourage all parties to continue to use dialogue to resolve their political differences. We're grateful to you, SRSG Chambas for your personal, quiet diplomacy, which, while not always in the public eye, has a significant impact across the region.

Mr President, regarding the situation in Mali, the United Kingdom believes that the transition period is an opportunity not only to prepare for free and fair elections, but to make progress on key issues such as the peace process and tackling corruption. The authorities in Mali should focus on these issues as a matter of urgency. Resuming the regular meetings of the Comité de Suivi de l'Accord is a positive first step, and we welcome the inclusion of women for the first time.

We remain deeply concerned by the continuing deteriorating humanitarian situation across much of the region, and we are concerned by the growing instances of forced displacement in central Sahel and north east Nigeria. Last year, the UK provided an additional \$21 million humanitarian funding to the Sahel, taking our funding there since 2019 to over \$200 million. This assistance has supported over seven million people in the hardest hit areas. But the assistance needs to reach those who need it. And we urge all parties to ensure unhindered humanitarian access to allow the delivery of goods and services. Without this, food insecurity and protection needs will continue to rise.

Mr President, the UK is concerned by the rise in human rights violations across West Africa and the Sahel, and we call for strengthened accountability from governments and improved compliance with international human rights standards. We are committed to supporting action on this. For example, with our contribution to international humanitarian law training for Malian armed forces and the support for the implementation of the Human Rights Compliance Framework for the G5 Sahel Joint Force.

We also, in these meetings, colleagues will recall, frequently advocate for

the protection of children, educators and schools across the region and encourage all governments to follow the Safe Schools Declaration in these meetings. We welcome the release of over 300 boys abducted in north west Nigeria late last year. This event reinforces the importance of this initiative.

Finally, Mr President, on climate, it is good to hear many Council members talk about the impact of climate change on security in this region, regardless of your views on the causes of climate change. The UK's views on this are quite clear. We know that the climate is changing and that it is negatively impacting security, as Ambassador Kimani set out very clearly. We have a responsibility as this Council to consider the impact of climate change more fully and factor it into the UN system response to ensure that we do what we can to prevent further risks to peace and security from the challenges posed by climate change.

Mr President, with these interconnected challenges facing this region, we welcome the continued implementation of the UN integrated strategy for the Sahel and UNOWAS's close engagement with the region and with regional bodies. As Ambassador Kimani says, we need a holistic approach with the security efforts that the G5, Sahel, Tacuba, Barkhane, but also national security efforts being joined up with the efforts of wider development partners to address the root causes of violence because the region is not going to make real progress unless security gains are underpinned by quick and effective development activity.

So I hope, Mr Chambas, that you can continue to champion this approach within the UN system to the region and beyond.

Thank you very much.

United Arab Emirates removed from travel corridor list

- United Arab Emirates (UAE) to be removed from list of travel corridors following a concerning increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases
- from 4am on 12 January 2021, travellers arriving into England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland from the UAE will need to self-isolate
- current national restrictions do not permit international travel, unless for a limited set of reasons

Following a significant increase in both the level and pace of change in confirmed cases, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has been removed from the UK list of [travel corridors](#).

From 4am on 12 January 2021, people returning to the UK from the UAE (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Ajman, Fujairah, Umm Al-Quwain, Sharjah and Ras Al Khaimah) will need to self-isolate for 10 days, as the country has been removed from the [travel corridor list](#).

The decision has been made following a significant acceleration in the number of imported cases, along with the number of reported new cases over the past 7 days, which have risen in the UAE by 52%.

People currently in the UAE are encouraged to follow the local rules, return home as normal and check [FCDO travel advice](#) for further information.

Passengers arriving from all international destinations, including the UAE, will be [required to present a negative COVID-19 test result taken up to 3 days before departing for England or Scotland](#) to help protect against new strains of coronavirus circulating internationally.

Passengers will need to present this proof to carriers, along with their [passenger locator form](#). The UK Border Force will conduct spot checks on arrival into England to ensure that passengers are fully compliant.

At the same time, the FCDO has updated its [travel advice](#) to advise against all but essential travel to UAE.

The government has made consistently clear it will take decisive action if necessary to contain the virus, including if the public health risk of people returning from a particular country without self-isolating becomes too high.

The devolved administrations have all taken the same decision today, so travellers arriving from the UAE into all parts of the UK will need to self-isolate.

[National restrictions for England](#) introduced on 6 January 2021 remain in place, meaning everyone must stay at home unless travelling for a very limited set of reasons, including for work. This means people can no longer travel to take holidays or travel internationally unless for work or other [legally permitted reasons](#). Those in breach of the rules face penalties starting at £200, rising to a maximum of £6,400.

Opening statement on Global Britain debate

I am delighted to open this debate on Global Britain, when for the first time in forty-eight years we now have full control of our trade policy.

Back in 1846, Richard Cobden inspired people in Manchester with his belief

that free trade would be

"the greatest revolution that ever happened in the world's history...drawing men together, thrusting aside antagonism...and uniting us in the bonds of eternal peace."

That revolution continues today, as for the first time in nearly half a century, we are a sovereign trading nation free to pursue British interests while promoting British values.

Our newly independent trade policy will create jobs, grow our slice of the global pie and unlock great swathes of the world to the best of Britain.

As we recover from Covid-19, we need to think radically about how we generate economic growth...

...about how we are going to use our new global platform in 2021 to promote free and fair trade...

And how we are going to take on those countries who try to cheat and undermine free enterprise.

In 2020, we negotiated trade agreements covering 63 nations and the European Union.

In 2021, we will use this year, including our Presidency of the G7, to champion free and fair trade in an era rife with pernicious practices...

We will promote modern rules that are relevant to people's lives for digital and data trade... We will champion high environmental and animal welfare standards in a science-led approach...

And we will push for modernisation of the World Trade Organisation and trade agreements to reflect our values of free enterprise and fair play.

We will also be build an advanced network of trade deals, from the Americas to the Indo-Pacific...

...with the UK at its heart as a global services and technology hub.

We have already reached deals covering 63 per cent of UK trade – well on our way to our manifesto target of 80 per cent in three years.

We want to hit that target...and deepen our existing relationships in areas like services and technology.

Exports are equivalent to nearly a third of our national income.

Trade equals jobs.

A job means independence and security... the realisation of our dreams.... funding public services and the future prospects of our country.

The deals we have done with the EU and our partners across the world, from

South Africa to South Korea, mean that our traders continue to enjoy preferential access to world markets.

We have secured arrangements with Turkey which mean that Ford in Dagenham can continue to export their engines tariff-free...

We have secured access to the Canadian market for our beef producers like the Foyle Food Group in Northern Ireland...

And we have secured tariff-free access into Mexico for our car exporters like Jaguar Land Rover...

While Scotch whisky – one of our biggest exports – continues to enter markets like Singapore tariff-free and stays recognised.

All in all, this adds up to £885 billion worth of trade that we have secured.

And in addition, we have been able to go further and faster in our deal with Japan

- protecting the free flow of data which benefits industries like fintech and computer gaming
- regulatory dialogue on financial services and improved mobility provisions including allowing spouses to travel with businesspeople
- we have secured additional protections for our fantastic creative industries from music to TV
- and recognition for geographical indications across the United Kingdom from Welsh Lamb, Scotch Beef, Armagh Bramley apples to English Sparkling Wine, subject to Japanese domestic processes.

This platform allows us to step up this year to show our full potential as president of the G7 and as an independent trading nation.

At the G7, we will work to reform the WTO, make progress on data and digital trade, and promote greener trade.

Our new UK Global Tariff will see around 57% per cent of our imports entering our market tariff-free, more than the 44% we had under the EU.

It will eliminate tariffs, in particular, on over a hundred green goods.

In short, our new tariff regime is lower, simpler and greener.

Furthermore, we are going to be working with our friends and family across the world to drive forward free and fair trade... setting the global standard for trade in the 21st century.

We are already in deep negotiations with the United States, Australia and New Zealand.

And this year, we will apply to one of the most dynamic trading areas on Earth, the Comprehensive and Progressive agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Joining is part of our plan to grow our economy by making it far easier for British goods to reach our friends in Asia and the Americas.

This high-standards agreement would align the UK with some of the world's fastest-growing economies in a free trade area covering nearly £9 trillion of GDP.

We are also going to be deepening our relationships with countries such as Canada, Mexico, South Korea and Israel.

As well as this, we are working closely with India – the world's largest democracy – on an enhanced trade partnership, reflecting our mutual interest in technology and innovation.

We are also in talks with Brazil and our allies in the Gulf.

But I want to reassure the House, we are going to ensure that no country is left behind without the benefits of free and fair trade with the United Kingdom.

Later this year we are launching an emerging markets trade scheme, which will offer the lowest income countries a better deal when they are trading with the UK.

It will be more generous than the EU scheme and help those countries onto the ladder towards prosperity through the enterprise and ingenuity of their people.

We want to encourage British business to take advantage of all these opportunities that we have either negotiated or are negotiating.

Therefore, we will be loudly and proudly championing exports in our key industries, from our food and drink, to services and technology trade.

We have a network of trade advisers across the country, ready to help our businesses go global.

They can be proud to put the Union Jack on their pack, which is one of the most recognised symbols around the world.

With our GREAT campaign, we are showing partners worldwide that Britain is "ready to trade". In December, the Prime Minister launched our new Office for Investment, under the leadership of Lord Grimstone.

It will work tirelessly to secure investment in every nation and region across Britain, backing jobs and livelihoods.

More than 56,000 new jobs were created last year through foreign investment in the UK, with over 9,000 others secured.

We will also be founding our first new Freeports, which will drive enterprise and growth in port cities and towns across the country as we turbocharge trade around the world.

Of course, many are sceptical about globalisation and the benefits of trade.

And the reason is that too many unfair practices, and cheating, have been allowed to undermine real free trade.

That is why we are establishing the Trade Remedies Authority, headed by Oliver Griffiths, to protect UK industries from unfair practices.

It is not right that ceramics manufacturers in Stoke on Trent can be undercut by goods subsidised by state-owned enterprises.

...And our innovators can have the fruits of their work taken under forced technology transfer. Or that goods can come into this country that have been produced through forced labour in abhorrent conditions

That is why we are pushing the World Trade Organisation for greater transparency and reform of the rules.

And joining CPTPP, with its ambitious digital and data provisions and clear rules, we will pile further pressure on the WTO to reform.

As an independent trading nation, we are setting our own path... and rejecting the twin errors of values-free globalisation and protectionism.

Instead, as a United Kingdom we are rooting our approach in our fundamental values of sovereignty, democracy, the rule of law and a fierce commitment to high standards.

That is why we are bringing together a coalition of like-minded nations to advance high standards worldwide, from food and animal welfare to the environment and data.

With fellow democracies like Japan and Canada, we are championing innovation, a cleaner planet, women's economic empowerment...and much more.

We have demonstrated this through the fantastic deal we have struck with the EU to ensure we can keep trading freely with zero tariffs and zero quotas, alongside deals covering 63 countries.

No other nation has ever negotiated so many trade deals simultaneously, and I am proud of the results we have achieved.

At this tough time, we need to embrace our future as a confident, optimistic, and outward-looking Global Britain: delivering jobs and prosperity at home while helping lead the fight for free and fair trade abroad.

My hope is that all sides of the House can join me in celebrating how far we have come and the huge opportunity we have in 2021...

...Striking deal after deal with our friends and family worldwide to support our values and full economic potential...

This is Global Britain in action.

Health and Social Care Secretary's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 11 January 2021

Good afternoon and welcome back to Downing Street for today's coronavirus briefing.

I'm joined by Professor Steve Powis, the National Medical Director of NHS England.

Before I turn to our vaccine delivery plan, which we've published today, I wanted to go through the latest coronavirus data.

As we know, the new strain of this virus is highly contagious, and it is putting our NHS under very significant pressure.

Yesterday 46,169 positive cases of coronavirus were recorded across the whole of the UK.

As the slide shows, 32,294 people are currently in hospital with coronavirus – that's across the UK and as you can see that is up sharply, it's up 22% from this time last week.

The average number of deaths reported each day over the past week is 926.

And our hearts go out to the family and the loved ones of each and every person who has died of coronavirus.

As the Chief Medical Officer said earlier today, we are at the worst point of this pandemic, and you can see that from this slide and from the increase in the number of people in hospital.

So the NHS, more than ever before, needs everybody to be doing something right now and that something is to follow the rules.

Now, I know there's been speculation about more restrictions.

And we don't rule out taking further action if it's needed.

But it's your actions now that can make a difference. Stay at home. And please reduce all social contact that is not absolutely strictly necessary.

That's what's needed.

Act like you have the virus.

And it's all the more important to do this because the vaccine rollout is now

proceeding at pace and we all know that this is the way out of the pandemic.

I am determined, as I have been for almost a year now, to drive this vaccination programme as fast as is safely possible.

I'm determined to ensure every adult in this country has the chance to be vaccinated.

And that as many as possible take up that chance to be vaccinated.

Vaccines are important and I care about vaccines because I want our country to get back to normal as fast as possible.

I want us to have that great British summer.

And my team and I are working hard to deliver this as fast as possible, both to save lives and to make people safe and to protect the NHS and reduce the very significant pressures it's under right now.

I wanted to bring you up to speed with the very latest statistics on vaccination.

So far, across the UK we've given 2.6 million doses to 2.3 million people.

And we've protected more people through vaccinations than all other countries in Europe put together.

Today I'd like to take you through the details of our [UK COVID-19 vaccines delivery plan](#) that we've just published.

It sets out how we will build on this work that's been done so far, and put in place the biggest vaccination programme in British history.

There are 4 parts to the plan.

The first is supply.

I've always believed in British science, and that it can find the solutions to get us out of this.

For a year now we have been working to develop and buy vaccines for everyone in the UK.

Thanks to our investment in Ebola and MERS vaccines several years ago, the Jenner Institute at Oxford University was able to repurpose existing work, and move so fast to develop a successful vaccine.

But our search has been global throughout, so while we've backed the scientists who've been working on this here at home, we've also worked with international partners like Pfizer and BioNTech, to ensure that we were the first country in the world to authorise, and use the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine.

And of course the Moderna vaccine has now been authorised and is ready to bring on stream.

I want to thank all those involved, but this work is not yet done.

The supply of the vaccine is currently the rate limiting step.

And we will bring forward as much vaccine as becomes available.

And we must ensure that we have the vaccine development and manufacturing capabilities in this country for the future too.

The next part of the plan is prioritisation, this has been much discussed.

The plan sets out how we prioritise the vaccine so that we can protect those at greatest clinical risk. And one simple statistic explains why this is important.

The top 4 priority groups account for 88% of the deaths from COVID.

This stark fact explains why we must prioritise according to clinical need – to save lives – and because that is the fastest route to safely lifting restrictions.

We are on track to deliver on our pledge to offer a first vaccine to everyone in the top 4 cohorts by the 15th of February.

I want to give you an update on progress.

Two-fifths of over 80s have now received their first dose.

Care home residents are of course in the very top priority group.

In the last few days, since the Oxford vaccine was approved for use in primary care on Thursday morning, we have significantly accelerated the care home vaccination rollout.

Almost a quarter of older care home residents have now received their first dose of the vaccine.

We are committed to reaching every care home resident this month.

And I want to see as much of that as possible as soon as possible.

I'm incredibly grateful to everybody working in social care.

Whether in care homes, or domiciliary care, for everything they are doing to keep the people who are the most vulnerable to COVID, to keep them safe right now.

This is not easy, but it is vital. And it is vital too that when the vaccine reaches your care home, everyone, everyone, residents and staff alike steps forward and gets that jab.

Each of these jabs helps save lives. And we're making this happen as fast as we can.

The plan sets out how we will continue through the clinically prioritised groups, and beyond.

So all adults can be offered a vaccine by the autumn.

The third part of the plan is expanding where you can be vaccinated.

As of Friday, 96% of the population in England lived within 10 miles of a vaccination site and we're expanding the number of vaccination sites further, right across the whole of the UK, with the devolved NHS responsible for delivery in each of the 3 devolved nations, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

This expansion will include community pharmacy and roving vaccination centres, on top of the hospitals, GP practices, and the 7 mass vaccination centres, that we have opened, including the one I visited today at Epsom.

This huge expansion means that by the end of January everyone will live within 10 miles of a vaccination centre, either fixed or roving in England. And this will help us make sure that everyone can get access to the vaccine that's so important.

The final part of this plan is about the people who will make it happen.

Over the past few months, we have recruited and trained an 80,000 strong vaccination workforce.

I am incredibly grateful to all who have stepped forward.

Including people from all parts of the NHS:

And so many volunteers who have come forward for their country.

Thank you for your service.

And I'm very grateful to the many offers of support we're receiving right now, and for all those who are in training as this vaccination rollout expands.

So that is the vaccine delivery plan. It is an incredibly important piece of work.

But while this crucial work takes place, each and every one of us must keep pushing back against this virus

By following the rules that are in place.

Please do your bit and help keep the NHS strong

While we roll up our sleeves and make this ambitious plan a reality.

So please, stay at home to protect the NHS and save lives.