

UK-Bangladesh Climate Partnership Forum launches virtual series

On 24 and 25 November, the UK and Bangladesh launched the first of a virtual series of events designed to build on the countries' growing collaboration in advancing the climate agenda on the journey towards next year's UN climate change conference (COP26).

The UK-Bangladesh Climate Partnership Forum virtual series brings together experts and leaders from Bangladesh and the UK to identify innovative ideas, partnerships and initiatives to catalyse climate action. These first two events focus on adaptation and resilience with future events structured around the COP26 themes of nature, clean energy and finance.

Bangladesh Director of Development at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Judith Herbertson opened the series on 24 November.

She said: One of the UK's top objectives for COP26, and for this forum, is to hear voices from frontline, from the young, from the experts, from the private sector, from our friends and from people we haven't heard from yet. We want to hear all your ideas.

The virtual series is led by Professor Saleemul Huq, Director, International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCAD) and Simon Maxwell, Senior Research Associate, Overseas Development Institute (ODI). It is managed by Mott MacDonald in partnership with ODI on behalf of the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the British High Commission Dhaka.

The event on 24 November featured four exciting and innovative approaches to climate adaptation and resilience from the UK and Bangladesh. Presentations were given by Dr Golam Rabbani, Head of Climate Bridge Fund Secretariat; Brian Kilkelly Development Lead, EIT-Climate KIC; Md. Bazlul Karim, Deputy Team Leader Char Development and Settlement Programme; and Dr Ed Suttie, BRE Centre for Resilience.

Presentations were followed by reflections from the panellists Erin Roberts, ODI Research Associate; Dilruba Haider, Programme Specialist on Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change and Humanitarian Actions, UN Women; Denise Bower, Executive Director, External Engagement, Mott MacDonald; and Professor Mashfiqus Salehin, Institute of Water and Flood Management, Bangladesh University Of Engineering and Technology.

The event on 25 November featured opening remarks from British High Commissioner in Dhaka, Robert Chatterton Dickson; State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh, Md. Shahriar Alam; Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon; and UK International Champion on Adaptation and Resilience for the COP26 Presidency, MP for Berwick-upon-Tweed, Anne-Marie Trevelyan.

Speaking about the partnership between the UK and Bangladesh, Lord Ahmad said

“This UK-Bangladesh partnership on climate action is built on the strong links between our two countries and will last long beyond COP26...The UK as COP26 President Designate, and Bangladesh as chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, are uniquely placed to play leading roles in this critical year ahead for our planet.”

Speaking on the topic of adaptation and resilience, Anne-Marie Trevelyan said

“Bangladesh has not stopped being a highly climate vulnerable country, but it is also now a leader on adaptation and resilience. There is much that the UK, and other countries, can learn from Bangladesh’s experience.”

Khurshid Alam, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP and Baroness Brown of Cambridge, Chair of the Committee on Climate Change’s Adaptation Committee and Chair of the Carbon Trust delivered the keynote speeches on climate adaptation from the perspective of Bangladesh and the UK.

Mr Alam and Baroness Brown were joined by Abul Kalam Azad, special envoy to the Climate Vulnerable Forum’s (CVF) Presidency; Dr Rebecca Nadin, Director of Programmes for Risk and Resilience, ODI; Dr Atiq Rahman, Executive Director, Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies; and Anu Jogesh, Policy and Governance Lead for Acclimatise South Asia, Acclimatise. The panellists reflected on the importance of seeing adaptation as a global issue requiring a systems-resilience approach that takes into account the transboundary nature of climate risks and acknowledged that the climate community needed to get better at communicating with policy makers, the media and the general public on issues around adaptation.

The next events in the series will focus on nature-based solutions and will take place on 8 and 9 December. Find out more and register at the series event page <http://cop26-uk-bangladesh-forum.eventbrite.com>

The UK will host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow in November 2021. The climate talks will be the biggest international summit the UK has ever hosted; bringing together over 30,000 delegates including heads of state, climate experts and campaigners to agree coordinated action to tackle climate change. In its role as president of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, Bangladesh will be representing more 1.2 billion people living in 48 of the world’s most climate vulnerable countries at COP26.

Further information

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UK government secures additional 2 million doses of Moderna COVID-19 vaccine

- UK government has now secured 7 million doses of Moderna vaccine, which will be available in Europe as early as spring 2021
- trials show vaccine is almost 95% effective
- deal means the UK now has access to a total of 357 million doses of vaccines from 7 different developers

The UK government has today (Sunday 29 November) signed a deal for a further 2 million doses of Moderna's promising vaccine candidate, bringing the total to 7 million doses for the UK.

Following today's deal, the UK now has access to enough doses of Moderna's vaccine candidate for around 3.5 million people.

To be approved for use in the UK, the Moderna vaccine must meet the strict standards of safety and effectiveness of the independent medicines regulator, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). If it is approved, 7 million doses could start to be delivered to the UK as early as spring 2021 – the same timetable as other countries in Europe.

The latest agreement is part of the government's strategy to develop a diverse portfolio of promising vaccine candidates. The government has now secured 357 million vaccine doses from 7 different developers, giving the UK the best possible chance of protecting the public from coronavirus as soon as possible.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

It is essential that we continue to bolster our portfolio of vaccine candidates to ensure we're in the best possible position to protect the public once we see that breakthrough.

The UK was one of the first countries in Europe to sign a deal with Moderna, and I'm delighted we have been able to secure a further 2 million doses of their promising candidate for the British public.

On 16 November, Moderna published initial data showing that its candidate is nearly 95% effective in protecting against COVID-19, with no safety issues identified to date. The safety data is still to be released by Moderna to show whether the vaccine is both safe and effective. Moderna is currently conducting phase 3 clinical trials of its vaccine and is using mRNA vaccine technology.

Until all the necessary stages are completed and a vaccine has been approved for use by the medicine regulator, the MHRA, the public must continue to take necessary actions to keep themselves and their loved ones safe, including following the [Hands, Face, Space guidance](#) and other public health advice in line with the area they live in.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Every week, we are getting more positive news about the range of vaccines in development, and thanks to the work of our taskforce the UK has pre-ordered hundreds of millions of doses from those companies most advanced in their work.

This includes buying a further 2 million doses of Moderna's vaccine, on top of the 5 million we've already secured.

With a wide range of vaccine candidates in our portfolio, we stand ready to deploy a vaccine should they receive approval from our medicines regulator, starting with those who will benefit most.

Chair of the government's Vaccine Taskforce Kate Bingham said:

Since its inception in June, one of the most important stated aims of the Vaccines Taskforce has been to secure access to the most promising vaccines across a broad range of technologies – thereby increasing the chances of having a safe and effective prevention as soon as possible against COVID-19. Moderna's vaccine was an important addition to our portfolio and securing an additional 2 million doses further adds to the protection we can provide to the public to end the pandemic.

Today's deal follows the independent regulator's [confirmation this week](#) that it has received the necessary data of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine to progress their review into whether the vaccine meets the required standards. Encouraging results from the phase III trials of the Oxford University/AstraZeneca were also published this week.

We have secured early access to over 357 million vaccines doses through agreements with several separate vaccine developers at various stages of trials, including:

- 100 million doses of University of Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine – phase 3

clinical trials

- 40 million doses of BioNTech/Pfizer vaccine – phase 3 clinical trials
- 7 million doses of Moderna vaccine – phase 3 clinical trials
- 60 million doses of Novavax vaccine – phase 3 clinical trials
- 60 million doses of Valneva vaccine – pre-clinical trials
- 60 million doses of GSK/Sanofi Pasteur vaccine – phase 1 clinical trials
- 30 million doses of Janssen vaccine – phase 2 clinical trials

We have invested over £230 million into manufacturing any successful vaccine and an enormous amount of planning and preparation has taken place across government to be able to quickly roll out the vaccine, including ensuring we have adequate provision, transport, PPE and logistical expertise to do so. We are also working at pace to prepare for the delivery of any potential COVID-19 vaccination programme as quickly as possible.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) will carefully and scientifically review the safety, quality and effectiveness data once it has all been submitted to determine how it protects people from COVID-19 and the level of protection it provides.

The data must include results from the lab and clinical trials; manufacturing and quality controls, product sampling, and testing of the final product.

Once they have thoroughly reviewed the data, the MHRA will seek advice from the government's independent advisory body, the Commission on Human Medicines. They will critically assess the data too before advising the government on the safety, quality and effectiveness of any potential vaccine.

The MHRA is globally recognised for requiring the highest standards of safety, quality and effectiveness for any vaccine.

[UK and France sign new agreement to tackle illegal migration](#)

The number of officers patrolling French beaches will double as a result of a new agreement reached by the Home Secretary and her French counterpart today to tackle migrant activity in the Channel.

Home Secretary Priti Patel and French Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin reaffirmed their commitment to make this route unviable. They signed an enhanced agreement which builds on the joint co-operation that has already seen the proportion of crossings intercepted and prevented rise from 41% in 2019 to 60% in recent weeks.

This increase in officer numbers represents a major uplift in capability that will significantly enhance law enforcement operations against illegal

immigration, including doubling the number of gendarmes, French police, patrolling the beaches from 1 December. This will bolster the patrolling of the 150-kilometre stretch of coastline regularly targeted by people-smuggling networks and enable quicker response rates to suspicious activity, stopping migrants leaving French beaches in the first place and preventing more dangerous and unnecessary crossings.

In addition to increased officer numbers, the Home Secretary and Interior Minister also agreed an enhanced package of cutting edge surveillance technology – including drones, radar equipment, optronic binoculars and fixed cameras. The specialist equipment will allow the French to be more efficient in searching and clearing areas faster and help ensure officers are deployed in the right place at the right time, as a result increasing the number of migrants and facilitators detected and prevented from entering the water.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

Today's agreement is a significant moment for our 2 countries, stepping up our joint action to tackle illegal migration. Thanks to more police patrols on French beaches and enhanced intelligence sharing between our security and law enforcement agencies, we are already seeing fewer migrants leaving French beaches.

The actions we have agreed jointly today go further, doubling the number of police officers on the ground in France, increasing surveillance and introducing new cutting edge technology, representing a further step forward in our shared mission to make channel crossings completely unviable.

On top of these new operational plans, we will introduce a new asylum system that is firm and fair, and I will bring forward new legislation next year to deliver on that commitment.

This focus on tackling criminal smuggling networks builds on collaboration between the UK and French law enforcement agencies which has already seen the creation of a new Joint Intelligence Cell (JIC). Since it opened in July, the JIC has helped secure around 140 arrests and prevent approximately 1,100 crossings.

In addition, this year Immigration Enforcement have convicted 57 individuals for people smuggling, including those convicted of facilitating small boats Channel crossings, resulting in sentencing of over 138 years. A further 46 people have been convicted of offences related to the small boat crossings. The total sentencing for small boats related convictions is over 26 years.

The package agreed at the meeting today also includes:

- steps to support migrants into appropriate accommodation in France in order to take them out of the hands of criminal gangs; and our continued support to accommodation centres where migrants can be supported and advised on claiming asylum in a safe third country

- measures to increase border security at ports in northern and western France to reduce opportunities for smuggling and ensure that we avoid the illegal migration threat shifting towards freight traffic

Both sides also agreed the importance of a continued close dialogue to reduce migratory pressures at the shared border both today and next year.

This is just one element of the plan to make this route unviable. We are fixing our broken asylum system to make it firm and fair, welcoming people by safe and legal routes and stopping the abuse of the system by people who come here from safe EU countries.

The new plan will come into force in the coming days. It will be subject to regular evaluation by the UK's Clandestine Channel Threat Commander Dan O'Mahoney and his counterpart in France.

How leaving the EU will boost Scottish farming

Andrew McCornick
President
NFUS

27 November 2020

Dear Andrew,

I have been disappointed to read in the media recent comments on funding for Scottish farming. I want to reassure you that claims that £170 million will be cut from Scottish farming support are simply incorrect and that Scotland's farmers will have far greater security in this coming year than they would have had inside the EU.

Here are the facts. In 2019, the UK Government made a commitment to match the current annual budget to farmers in every year of this Parliament. In 2019, Scotland's farming community received almost £595 million in total farm support. In 2021/22, Scotland will receive a little over £24 million in outstanding EU funds, and just over £570 million in new Exchequer funding, totalling almost £595 million.

In 2021/22, the UK Government has also been able to increase Scotland's block grant by £2.4 billion in real terms, which the Scottish Government can use to benefit farmers and farming communities. We promised that no farmer would be out of pocket – we have delivered on that promise, and will continue to deliver for every year of this Parliament.

The EU is in fact taking a very different direction on funding the Common Agricultural Policy. CAP funding is likely to be cut by around 10% for the coming funding period. For Scotland, this would have amounted to an annual loss of almost £60 million. Within the EU, Scotland and the rest of the UK had too little say in how farming payments were distributed to our farmers. Farmers, consumers and taxpayers will benefit from closing the door on the CAP.

Being outside the EU not only gives our farmers a guarantee that their funding will be maintained, but also means we can develop specific policies which are suitable for Scottish and UK farmers. This will allow the UK to innovate and to incentivise sustainable practices to support our ambitious, world-leading 25 Year Environment Plan.

We are working constructively with the Scottish Government as they lead on developing new ways of funding farming, to ensure that, throughout these trying times, Scottish farmers can continue to produce the world leading food and drink that is so coveted.

The UK Government has frequent, constructive and highly valued discussions with both NFUS and the Scottish Government, and we look forward to more of the same. We have a wonderful opportunity in the coming months and Scotland's produce and farmers will be at the forefront of the UK's new start.

As this is a matter of general interest, I am releasing this letter to the media.

DAVID DUGUID MP PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND

[Ministerial Appointment: 28 November 2020](#)

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