

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.

[PM meeting with President Tusk: 23 September 2019](#)



The Prime Minister met with European Council President Tusk this afternoon at the UN General Assembly.

The Prime Minister underlined that, when the UK leaves the EU on 31 October,

his preference is that we do so with a deal and spoke about the non-papers which the U.K. shared with the European Commission last week.

The leaders discussed the progress of the talks between the UK and Taskforce 50 in finding an alternative to the backstop that protects the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement and the single market.

The Prime Minister emphasised that in order to secure a deal we will now need to see movement and flexibility from the EU.

The leaders agreed to keep in touch over the coming weeks.

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[Alok Sharma speech to UN General Assembly on Universal Health Coverage](#)

I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly and colleagues from Thailand and Georgia for leading the Political Declaration on Universal Health Coverage.

Today, we renew our commitment to that goal.

It is an ambitious and vital commitment.

The UK has a world-class health system. For over 70 years, our National Health Service has delivered safe healthcare free at the point of use to the British people. We fully support international efforts on universal health coverage.

This is urgent. Every day around 800 women around the world die needlessly in childbirth or through unsafe pregnancies – all because of a lack of basic healthcare.

The UK is committed to defending and promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights. Women and girls must have control over their bodies, and access to services they need.

We cannot achieve Universal Health Coverage without Universal Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.

I am therefore very pleased to announce a £600 million Reproductive Health Supplies programme. This will help 20 million women and girls to access family planning and prevent five million unintended pregnancies each year up to 2025.

This builds on the UK's long-standing commitment to gender equality. As Employment Minister, I worked with the International Labour Organization to address violence in the workplace. We likewise know that effective health services reduce violence against women and girls.

Universal health coverage is a smart investment. Not just for health, but for all the Global Goals. It reduces poverty and drives prosperity.

We cannot afford not to do this.

But we must turn our political commitment into action.

Countries must invest public resources in universal health coverage to protect the poorest. This means addressing causes of illness and death like malnutrition and unsafe water and sanitation, and the threat posed by antimicrobial resistance. We must spend carefully to help as many people as possible.

We need systems that can protect everyone. I have seen for myself Ebola outbreaks being made worse by weak and fractured health systems.

This needs good infrastructure, strong systems and services.

We know what it takes. We have committed to do it. Let's now act to make universal health coverage a reality.

Thank you.

[New Syrian Constitutional Committee:](#) [Foreign Secretary statement](#)



The United Nations Secretary General has today announced the formation of a Syrian Constitutional Committee as part of the UN led political process for peace in Syria. The UK welcomes the step and the efforts of UN Syria Envoy Geir Pedersen.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

After eight years of horrendous conflict, this is a welcome first step towards the peace that the Syrian people so desperately need. The regime and its backers must now show that they are committed to finding a resolution to this conflict, by engaging in good faith with the constitutional committee.

Alongside this, all parties need to return urgently to the previously agreed ceasefire, and to protect civilians.

Background

- The Foreign Secretary will host a meeting on Syria with Egypt, France, Germany, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the US at the United Nations General Assembly on Thursday 26 September.
- The UK would only consider providing reconstruction assistance if it sees genuine progress towards a credible, inclusive political settlement.

Further information

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[UK experts help stop spread of terrorist videos online](#)

New research backed by UK funding and expertise will help stop violent videos being shared online after terrorist attacks, Boris Johnson said at the UN General Assembly in New York.

The Prime Minister announced new funding to support efforts to develop industry-wide technology that can better identify online videos designed to avoid existing detection methods.

Millions of videos of the Christchurch shootings in New Zealand spread across online platforms in the wake of the attack in March which killed 51 people.

Many had been intentionally altered to slip through current content filters and it took hours and even days for them to be removed. This also meant families of those caught in the attack were faced with footage of their loved ones circulating online.

UK data-science experts will use new funding to create an algorithm which any

internet company in the world can use to improve their detection of violent and harmful videos and prevent them being made available to their users.

This will make it much harder for terrorist footage to be shared online. The outcomes of the research will also be used to help identify other types of harmful online content such as child sexual abuse.

The announcement further demonstrates how the UK is bringing together governments and industry in the fight against online extremism. We kick-started this fight by playing a leading role in setting up the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism following the Westminster attacks.

This also honours commitments made in the Christchurch Call to Action to tackle terrorist use of the internet, which world leaders signed up to at a summit in Paris in May.

Today the Prime Minister addressed a leaders' event in the margins of UNGA. Hosted by Prime Minister Arden, President Macron, the King of Jordan and the UN Secretary General it followed on from the Paris summit and focused on countering terrorist narratives online and offline.

The Prime Minister said:

The internet can and should be a force for good in the world – one that can unite and empower our citizens, increase our knowledge and understanding, and open up society.

What it cannot be is a place to watch mass murder unfold. We will not allow technology to be harnessed for evil.

British experts are at the forefront of the fight against online terror and this new funding will boost their pioneering work to find innovative new ways to tackle the threats this poses to our values and way of life.