

British High Commissioner visits North of Pakistan

World news story

The British High Commissioner Christian Turner travelled to Chitral, Hunza and Gilgit this week in his first visit to the North of Pakistan. The visit was part of a joint effort with the Canadian High Commission and the Aga Khan Foundation.



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During the visit, the British High Commissioner stressed the potential for sustainable tourism in northern Pakistan to create jobs and support local communities.

He also saw the impacts of climate change on local communities. Pakistan is the 5th most vulnerable country to climate change, and has more glacial ice than any country in the world outside the Polar Regions, since 2015, the number of lakes caused by melting glaciers in Pakistan has increased from 30 to 150. He highlighted UK's support for Pakistan's drive to find nature-based solutions to climate change, in advance of the UK-hosted COP26 international climate negotiations in 2021.

British High Commissioner Christian Turner CMG said:

In my first visit to the North of Pakistan I was blown away by its natural beauty. But the potential for sustainable tourism and its communities are at risk from climate change. As part of our preparations for hosting the 2021 COP26 climate negotiations, the UK will do more to help vulnerable communities in Pakistan deal with the impact of climate change and protect these magnificent landscapes. Our world is our responsibility.

The High Commissioner visited UK funded climate-resilience activities in

central Garam Chashma. UK plans to invest £13 million in Pakistan this year on tackling climate change. This will include supporting vulnerable communities adapt to climate change, improve resilience through emergency disaster planning and helping to increase the use of renewable energy.

The visit also focused on girl's education and support for gender equality. The UK is committed to ensuring every girl gets 12 years of quality education, and has supported nearly 8 million girls in Pakistan to attend primary and secondary school.

The High Commissioner visited Government Girls School in Hunza, the Chitral Women Sports Club and met inspiring women entrepreneurs who are leading the way on achieving Pakistan's potential and delivering inclusive prosperity in their communities.

At Karakorum International University, the High Commissioner awarded Scottish Pakistan Scholarships to students; and learned about their experience and future ambitions. The Scotland Pakistan Scholarship for Young Women and Girls aims to make higher education more accessible to underprivileged girls across Pakistan.

Notes to editors:

- The British High Commissioner was accompanied by Development Director for Pakistan Annabel Gerry on this trip.
- The UK is committed to using its Presidency of COP26 to be held in Glasgow 2021 to ensure the priorities of the most affected countries, such as Pakistan, are heard and acted upon.
- The UK is committed to supporting Pakistan on climate resilience, nature-based solutions and on leveraging financing from other donors and the private sector on green and clean development.
- Nature-based solutions could provide a third of global climate change mitigation, but only attracts 3% of global funding. Pakistan sets a powerful example to the world, and the UK will work together to make the case at COP26 for nature to be at the heart of global climate action.
- The UK supported local communities worst affected by the glacial flash floods of 2015 and have supported post-flood reconstruction and disaster preparedness work in Garam Chasma through Multi-Year Humanitarian Programme (MYHP) and Building Disaster Resilience Programme (BDRP), delivered by implementing partner ACTED.
- ACTED helped to re-establish and train the village Emergency Response Team and has also constructed drainage lines, roads and irrigation

channels, build flood protection walls, and shelters for those who have lost their homes in disasters, with UK funds.

- 'Climate smart' training helps farmers adapt their agricultural techniques to ensure food security.

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Contact

British High Commission, Islamabad

Tel: 0300 500 5306

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