

International co-operation only way to get travellers home and beat coronavirus, says the Foreign Secretary

At a US-chaired virtual meeting of G7 Foreign Ministers today, members of the G7 committed to use their collective power and resources to respond to the “unprecedented” challenge of getting stranded nationals home during the coronavirus pandemic.

The Foreign Secretary led the top item on the agenda on coronavirus. Based on joint work by the UK and Germany, G7 Foreign Ministers (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK, the US and the EU) agreed 5 critical areas were the priority for international action:

1. Preventing further crises and strengthening resilience of the most vulnerable countries. The G7 committed support to those countries and people most at risk, leading the international effort by helping to fund the WHO’s £71 billion overall requirement for the immediate public health response and priority research.
2. Tackling the immediate health emergency. Through increased support to the UN, and in particular the World Health Organisation. The 7 countries committed to working together to develop, manufacture and distribute medication and vaccines including through strong financial support to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations. The G7 will also support a Global Accord to ensure fair access to future diagnostics, drugs and vaccines to the global community.
3. Protecting global production and supply chains. Members agreed on the need to protect global production and vital supply chains and work together to ensure a speedy recovery from the crisis. Ministers committed to reducing tariffs in medical supplies and pharmaceutical products in order to help those most at risk.
4. Keeping global travel routes open. As our citizens try to return home, we need to keep commercial options available. And where commercial flights are not running, ensure that special flights, where possible, can take people home.
5. Standing up to those who seek to attack our shared values, and protecting our democracies against dis-information.

The UK has so far committed £241 million to support global efforts to combat the coronavirus outbreak including £40 million to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, while UK scientists are already supporting the development and testing of eight different vaccine options. The UK stands ready to provide further funding as necessary.

Speaking after the G7, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

Today, I've agreed to work together to intensify international co-operation to support vulnerable countries, pursue a vaccine, protect the world economy, and enable our citizens who are stranded to get home safely.