

New UK aid to help stop the spread of coronavirus around the world

- UK aid to the World Health Organisation (WHO) will help prevent the spread of the virus in developing countries, by supporting them to rapidly identify and care for patients with symptoms.
- Additional experts funded by UK aid will be deployed to the WHO to help coordinate the international response.
- The new support announced today demonstrates how UK aid is making the world a safer place, tackling disease outbreaks that do not respect borders.

The International Development Secretary Alok Sharma has today pledged new support to the WHO to help respond to the global coronavirus outbreak.

A number of developing countries across Asia and Africa have identified potential cases, but many lack the tools, expertise and infrastructure to diagnose and treat patients themselves. Proper detection and isolation of patients is essential to prevent the spread of the disease globally, and leaving countries with fragile health systems unable to respond risks further outbreaks across the world.

£5 million of UK aid will support the WHO's Flash Appeal to stop the spread of the disease by supporting the developing countries most at risk of coronavirus to quickly identify cases and care for patients.

This will include training rapid response teams and medical staff to identify and respond to symptoms, raising awareness in developing countries of how to avoid coronavirus and predicting the spread of the virus to better target future support.

On top of the UK's support for the Flash Appeal, additional experts funded by UK aid are expected to be deployed to the WHO. The experts will help coordinate the international response to ensure developing countries are better prepared and can respond effectively to potential cases.

The UK is well prepared for these types of outbreaks and was one of the first countries in the world to develop a laboratory test for the new virus.

International Development Secretary Alok Sharma said:

Diseases are global threats and to save lives around the world we need a fully coordinated international response.

By supporting developing countries with fragile health systems to properly respond to suspected cases of coronavirus, UK aid can help prevent the spread of the outbreak.

New UK aid support announced today follows £40 million invested into vaccine and virus research earlier this week by the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC). The new DHSC funding, some of which is also UK aid, will support work on developing new vaccines for epidemics, including three new programmes to develop vaccines against the novel coronavirus, 2019-nCoV.

Notes to editors

- UK aid will support the WHO's Emergency Flash Appeal to respond to coronavirus. The WHO has initially asked donors worldwide for a total of \$61.5 million (approximately £47 million) of new funding, of which the UK will contribute £5 million.
- In addition, UK aid will fund the deployment of experts to the WHO's Regional Office for Africa (AFRO) in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo.