

# News story: UK response to Ebola cases in the DRC

The UK government is working with the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and World Health Organization (WHO) to monitor the situation and be ready to act quickly to tackle the spread of the disease.□

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

The Ebola epidemic in 2014 highlighted that to save lives we need to act quickly to stop the spread of this disease.

We're well-practiced in responding to disease outbreaks, and are coordinating across government to support the WHO in their leadership of the response. Vaccines have been stockpiled, we have built research and monitoring capacity, and the Rapid Support Team of health experts stand ready to be deployed if needed.

I've spoken to the UK team in the DRC and heard how we are working with the country's government, the WHO and other partners to monitor the situation closely and to take fast and appropriate action to tackle the spread of Ebola, to keep us all safe from this disease.

I'd also like to thank the brave healthcare experts already working on this response, and on broader work to tackle disease outbreaks across the globe to stop these threats reaching our shores.

It is vital we are ready to respond rapidly when outbreaks are detected, which is why the UK is the second largest contributor to the WHO's Contingency Fund for Emergencies, from which \$1 million has already been mobilised to respond to this outbreak. We also work to strengthen health systems in high-risk countries such as DRC, so that they can better detect and tackle disease outbreaks when they arise.

DFID and Wellcome jointly fund a research initiative on epidemic preparedness. Today, DFID is making available £1 million from this programme to support the rapid response, in addition to a further [£2 million being made available by Wellcome](#).

DFID has worked with Wellcome to develop a safe vaccine for Ebola which is currently stockpiled, ready for use, by the Global Vaccines Alliance, GAVI – to which we are a major contributor.

The UK Public Health Rapid Support Team is also on standby ready to be deployed to support the response, if required.

DRC has experienced several Ebola outbreaks since 1976, and the country is

familiar with managing the disease.

The FCO have also updated [travel advice](#) for DFID DRC.

#### **Notes to editors**

- The £1 million provided through the Joint Initiative on Epidemic Preparedness is part of the £19 million we provide to Wellcome from 2016-21.
- WHO released US\$1 million from its Contingency Fund for Emergencies (CFE) to support response activities for the next three months with the goal of stopping the spread of Ebola to surrounding provinces and countries. The CFE has a vital and unique role to play in the global effort to prevent and mitigate health emergencies. The UK announced this year an increase of support of £4 million for the CFE, bringing the total commitment to £10 million.