

Press release: International Development Minister praises British humanitarian heroes at Kemble disaster aid hub

Brave humanitarian workers based in Kemble, Gloucestershire, are the unsung heroes of 2017 for the role they played in Britain's rapid responses to three major humanitarian catastrophes this year, the Minister for International Development Alistair Burt has said.

At Britain's aid distribution hub at Cotswold Airport in Kemble, the Minister thanked staff for their tireless work delivering life-saving UK aid in response to the devastating Caribbean hurricanes, the ongoing Rohingya crisis and to prevent a famine in Somalia this year.

The facility in Kemble is one of two major global stockpiles where the Department for International Development stores life-saving equipment and supplies for crises – and is the only one based in Britain.

This year, emergency UK aid from emergency stockpiles, such as in Kemble, has provided:

- 827 tonnes of supplies in response to hurricanes Irma and Maria in the Caribbean, including 6,000 hygiene kits, 5,050 solar lanterns, 4,710 shelter kits, 5,140 water purification cubes and 16,000 buckets;
- 10,000 shelter kits, 20,000 blankets and 10,500 sleeping mats in response to the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh; and
- 20,000 shelter kits and peg and pole sets to prevent the humanitarian situation in Somalia deteriorating further.

Speaking at the disaster aid hub in Kemble, International Development Minister Alistair Burt said:

UK aid has saved countless lives this year by responding rapidly to disasters around the world and our aid distribution hub in Kemble is crucial to getting emergency support to those that so urgently need it.

These brave humanitarian workers are the unsung heroes of 2017.

They have played a vital role getting life-saving food, water and

shelter to people struck by hurricanes in the Caribbean, innocent families driven from their homes in Burma and people starving because of the food crisis in East Africa.

The UK prides itself on not only delivering aid quickly, but also making sure our products are the best possible quality.

I am proud that we are driving innovation and the hub in Kemble is filled to the rafters with durable products that people in emergency situations can rely on in the toughest situations imaginable.

By maintaining its own supplies at Cotswold Airport, the Department for International Development (DFID) is able to fly emergency aid to people in disaster situations as quickly as possible.

The UK's emergency response capacity has been increased this year and DFID is able to respond to six humanitarian emergencies a year, delivering life-saving supplies to 25,000 people in a disaster.

Staff are on alert 24 hours a day and are ready to respond to disasters that could strike at anytime, anywhere in the world.

Staff are busy restocking the aid distribution hub, which remains ready to respond to any emergencies and is expected to be fully stocked by Christmas Day.

Notes to Editors

1. DFID's aid distribution hub in Kemble has been in operation for more than 8 years.
2. It currently stores solar lanterns, kitchen sets, shelter kits, water purification kits, armoured vehicles, a field hospital, a boat module, an office and life support module and part of an airfield module.
3. The site has 22,000 square foot of storage, which means DFID can respond to six crises a year. The supplies held in Kemble alone could deliver life-saving supplies to 25,000 people in a disaster situation.
4. The facility in Kemble is one of two major global stockpiles where the Department for International Development stores life-saving equipment and supplies for crises – the other stockpile is in Dubai.