

# Press release: Jeremy Hunt: Effects of climate change are fuelling conflict, UK to drive forward the global response

- £153 million for three major new UK aid programmes to help millions of farmers across Africa and South Asia affected by climate change and boost climate resilience in Ethiopia
- Foreign Secretary backs UK bid to host COP26 in 2020

Speaking in Nigeria on a five-day visit to Africa this week, the Foreign Secretary highlighted the vital role the UK is playing in tackling climate change, the most critical challenge facing future generations and which is ever more difficult to tackle in countries such as Nigeria, that face the additional threat of violent instability in parts of the country.

Over the next century increasing temperatures and extreme weather across Africa will continue to have a profound impact on the lives and livelihoods of communities. That is why since 1990, the UK has reduced emissions and grown the economy at the fastest rate in the G7. It is important we continue international cooperation to tackle the causes of climate change, and prevent further potentially devastating consequences for regional stability, developmental progress and future prosperity.

This is already being seen in the 'middle belt' region of Nigeria, where the impacts of climate change are affecting grazing lands, and as such have become a driver of the violence between farmers and herders in the region.

At a roundtable meeting in Abuja today, the Foreign Secretary heard about the very real impact of climate change on people and communities across Nigeria, including the role it plays fuelling violent conflict in some parts of the country.

In the Lake Chad Basin, desertification and land degradation caused by climate change have contributed to extreme poverty, one of the drivers of terrorism and the decade-long conflict that has left 10 million people without enough to eat every day and forced over 2.4 million people to abandon their homes.

Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said:

We know that if we don't work together to tackle climate change it will have a catastrophic impact on hundreds of millions of people across Nigeria, the Sahel and more widely across Africa, and indeed the world, hitting the poorest and most vulnerable the hardest. 9.6 million people living in Nigeria and the Sahel can't reliably get food – and nearly 40% of people across the Sahel live on less than

a \$2 a day.

Countries across the Sahel are among the most exposed to the consequences of climate change. We need to prevent the escalation of conflict and instability by tackling the root causes. Africa cannot be left to manage this crisis alone. That's why the UK will lead efforts on climate resilience in the poorest and most vulnerable countries at this year's UN Climate Summit, and has bid to host the vital COP26 in 2020.

To help combat this threat, the Foreign Secretary has announced three major new UK aid programmes, totalling nearly £153 million, which will help millions of farmers across Africa and South Asia adapt to the effects of climate change and boost climate resilience in Ethiopia.

Through the new Enhancing Digital and Innovation for Agri-food Systems and Livelihoods (eDIAL) programme, the UK will work in partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and GSMA (the global network of mobile providers) plus other agribusinesses to develop digital solutions to improve returns for business and generate new evidence on how digital solutions can improve farmers' productivity and resilience to climate shocks.

The Strengthening Impact Investing Markets in Agriculture (SIIMA) programme will launch a new partnership with the Shell Foundation and Acumen to mobilise £125 million additional investment and encourage future investment, including from UK investors, in innovative agri-tech businesses. This will enable the scaling up of climate-smart technologies – such as pay-as-you-go solar powered irrigation systems – across Africa which will equip farmers with the tools they need to adapt to the effects of climate change. The UK government has pledged £57.5 million for both the eDIAL and SIIMA programmes.

Finally, the UK will provide up to £95 million over five years (2019 – 2024), to support sustainable access to climate resilient clean water, improved sanitation services and good hygiene practices in Ethiopia. This programme will prioritise the drought-affected areas of the country, helping 1.2 million people by improving public health, education and nutrition.

The UK is spending at least £5.8 billion on climate finance in 2016-20 to help developing countries become more resilient to the impacts of climate change and support low carbon growth. Our co-leadership role on resilience and adaptation at the UN Climate Action Summit in September and recent bid to host COP26 next year demonstrate the UK's deep commitment to tackling climate change.

## **Notes to editors**

- Current UK-funded climate change projects in Nigeria include the UK-Nigeria Climate Finance Accelerator. This initiative draws on UK expertise in the City of London, by bringing together low-carbon project developers with prospective investors to help meet emission reduction

targets.

- The UK is also helping to develop green bonds in Nigeria and has supported investment in large-scale solar generation through the multilateral Clean Technology Fund.

## **Further information**