

Press release: UK aid support for those at risk from drought in Afghanistan

A new UK aid package will contribute emergency food supplies for 1.4 million people in Afghanistan whose lives are at risk from a deadly drought, International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt announced on 27 July.

The UK is one of the first countries to support the United Nations' appeal. Our rapid response will help import and distribute food and nutrition supplies before the situation deteriorates further.

UK support will help some of the poorest people who are reliant on agriculture for food and income but will struggle to survive when this year's harvest fails in the coming weeks.

This UK aid package of support will provide immediate food and nutrition aid for 441,000 people who are already in a critical situation, including by distributing fortified wheat flour, fortified vegetable oil, pulses, salt and other nutritious foods to prevent malnutrition.

It will also support 1.4 million people until early next year by helping to replenish stockpiles of food and import high nutrient goods, which are high in essential vitamins, minerals and proteins.

International Development Secretary, Penny Mordaunt, said:

The drought in Afghanistan is an unfolding crisis, with 1.4 million people's lives at risk when this year's harvest fails in a number of provinces in only a matter of weeks.

The UK continues to stand by the government of Afghanistan and we have taken decisive action to step in early before the worst of the drought strikes to help prevent needless pain and suffering.

We call on other countries to join this international effort to support some of the world's most vulnerable people during what will be immensely difficult times.

The UK support is part of a response being coordinated by the United Nations and the Government of Afghanistan. It will help prevent displacement of families who could otherwise be forced to leave their homes and communities.

Many of the poorest families have sold their livestock to get the small

amount of money they need to buy food. Around 50,000 people have already fled to Herat City, in western Afghanistan, in a desperate search for ways to feed their families.

The most vulnerable people in Afghanistan have a limited ability to survive such a severe drought as a result of extreme poverty. Families in the worst affected areas have no water to grow crops for next year and are now surviving on only one meal a day, which fails to provide the calories and nutritional content they need to survive.

- Today's £10 million package is a new allocation consisting of £1.44m from the existing humanitarian budget and £8.55m from the DFID Afghanistan country budget for 2018/19.
- It will be delivered in partnership with the World Food Programme in support of the Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan.
- Extremely low levels of rainfall coupled with a major heatwave mean that the drought in Afghanistan is now classified as 'severe'.

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