

Protecting people and nature from the effects of the climate crisis

Excellencies, colleagues, friends.

Good afternoon, I am delighted that so many of you are with us for this event on the Risk-Informed Early Action Partnership.

Just after I became UK Secretary of State for International Development in 2019, Hurricane Dorian struck.

And the reports that came back were terrible to hear.

It goes without saying that if we can minimise such suffering and devastation, then we must.

And the need to do so is increasingly acute.

The effects of the climate crisis are increasing in frequency and severity – from floods and fires, to storms and droughts.

Protecting people and nature from such events is at the heart of the UK's COP26 Presidency.

We are determined to build on the COP25 call to avert, minimise and address loss and damage.

And adaptation is one of our key priorities.

One that we will be pushing at all major international events this year, including the G7.

Early action is a vital part of this work.

With sufficient warning, a smallholder farmer can save crops from floods.

And authorities can evacuate homes before hurricanes strike.

In short, early action saves lives and protects livelihoods.

I saw the benefits myself recently in Kenya, where the Daraja Project is making weather forecasting more accessible to people living in informal city settings.

Allowing them to take action, such as clearing drains and safeguarding valuables before rains come. Protecting houses and incomes.

It is no surprise then, that the economics support early action: every \$1 invested in early warning systems can save up to \$9 overall.

Yet one in three people across the world are still not adequately covered by

early warning systems.

Financial investments can be difficult to secure.

And countries are not always able to translate early warning into early action.

The UK COP26 Presidency is working to significantly increase adaptation finance, and to improve access to it.

This was one of the key issues we addressed in our Climate and Development Ministerial meeting in March.

And we need to rapidly scale up early action. To build resilience and reduce vulnerability.

Here, REAP plays an essential role. Bringing together governments, civil society, international organisations and the private sector.

To showcase best practice and match resources to need.

It was my pleasure to help launch the Partnership as International Development Secretary in 2019, along with many partners here today.

And I very much hope that this event will strengthen the Partnership further.

By bringing new partners on board.

And by securing new commitments to help achieve REAP's aim of making one billion people safer from climate disaster by 2025.

Whether that is through investments, sharing good practice, or placing early action at the heart of your plans and policies.

So I wish you the very best for the Dialogue.

And let's work together to build a safer, more resilient world.

Thank you.