

UK aid's biggest ever single direct commitment to tackle climate change in Africa

- International Development Secretary Rory Stewart announces package to help Africa deal with climate change and move away from fossil fuels.
- During Kenya visit, he sees communities hit by drought and the world's last two remaining northern white rhinos.
- African nations are among the worst hit by climate change.

A UK aid package to tackle climate change across Africa has been announced by the International Development Secretary Rory Stewart during a two day visit to Kenya.

The support would help sub-Saharan African countries build resilience to climate change and develop low carbon economies.

Increasing temperatures and extreme weather across the continent are having a profound impact on the lives and livelihoods of communities.

During his visit, the Secretary of State saw first-hand what happens when we do not protect the planet, including damaged natural flood defences; arid, drought-stricken land; and wildlife, the environment and jobs put at risk. He highlighted how tackling climate change is a global problem, and taking on an issue which affects us all will also ultimately benefit the UK.

Over the next five years, the new £250 million UK aid package would ensure UK expertise and experience can help developing countries become more climate resilient and move away from fossil fuels onto cleaner energy sources.

Working in partnership with African governments, organisations and communities, this funding would be the Department for International Development's (DFID's) largest single direct climate investment ever in the continent.

The Secretary of State said during his visit to a drought-affected village in Marsabit (July 12):

We are facing a global climate emergency. Polluted air, rising sea levels and increasing temperatures are felt by everyone in the world.

We must all play our part to protect the environment, wildlife, vulnerable families and communities – and this includes investing in renewable energy.

I am today announcing DFID's biggest ever single direct aid investment in climate and the environment across Africa. This

builds on my ambition to double DFID's efforts on this issue globally. Tackling climate change is of direct benefit to everyone living on this planet, including of course in the UK.

African nations are responsible for just 2 to 3% of global emissions, but the continent is set to be the worst affected by the devastating impacts of climate change. Kenya is getting warmer and its rainfall becoming more uncertain.

In the coastal town of Lamu, in southern Kenya, the International Development Secretary heard on Thursday (July 11) about the importance of mangrove conservation. These trees act as a vital natural flood defence protecting communities from storms.

However, they are among the world's most threatened vegetation and nearly 40% of Lamu's mangroves have already been destroyed.

The International Development Secretary also visited the UNESCO World Heritage site Lamu Old Town where he heard how UK aid will support sustainable development of the town. While there he announced an additional £10 million towards DFID's Sustainable Urban Economic Development programme to support urban economic growth in Kenya, which is resilient to climate-related shocks and disasters.

On Friday (July 12), the International Development Secretary met with communities in northern Kenya whose lives have been hit by drought. He announced an extra £4 million UK aid commitment to help prevent malnutrition and the threat of starvation for those living off arid lands in Kenya.

The effects of a changing climate and damage to the environment can already be seen in the village of Loiyangalani, near Marsabit. In 2017 villagers experienced the worst drought for over five years, with people and livestock threatened by death, disease and starvation.

Wildlife and biodiversity is also under threat. Globally, one million animal and plant species are threatened with extinction. During a visit to Ol Pejeta conservancy in central Kenya, he saw the last two Northern White Rhino on the planet; a sub-species on the edge of extinction. The combination of cattle herders searching for food for their livestock and human conflict is having an impact on the habitats of rhinos – making them more vulnerable to extinction.

UK aid is helping to preserve the environment where wildlife like rhinos live. It does this in part, by helping cattle herders in Kenya fatten up their cows to earn more from their livestock while helping to manage the land where they graze, so they are not competing so intensely for grassland with such rhinos and other endangered species.

The UK is also working with African nations to deliver an ambitious move to efficient, low carbon technologies. An estimated 600 million Africans currently do not have access to electricity, but UK aid – through its development finance arm CDC and UK private sector investment is helping to

support Kenya's renewable energy sector, by funding the development of the largest onshore wind farm in sub-Saharan Africa at Lake Turkana.

Notes to editors:

- The UK is one of Kenya's largest bilateral donors. Through UK aid, we are helping those living in poverty in Kenya to build institutions, create jobs, reduce the risks of poverty among marginalised people, increase climate resilience, and solve social challenges through the private sector.
- The £250 million climate programme will work across Sub-Saharan Africa, in partnership with African governments and institutions, to increase resilience and support the transition of countries to low carbon economies. The funding will also help build technical expertise across a range of sectors to support the continent to deal with the devastating impacts of climate change and help it move to clean energy sources.
- Sustainable Urban Economic Development (SUED) announcement – The SUED programme which runs for five years supports 10 fast growing towns across Kenya to develop sustainable urban economic plans and attract investment at a town level. The additional £10 million will extend this support to two additional municipalities in Kenya.
- Lake Turkana Windfarm: 365 wind turbines spread out over 40,000 acres of land, are providing approximately 17% of Kenya's installed power capacity. This reliable low-cost energy which goes straight into the national grid, is helping light homes and power businesses.
- Drought response: £4 million of UK aid has been committed to help avert deaths arising from the latest drought to affect Kenya. UK aid will support 26,000 children under the age of five with acute malnutrition and 2,700 pregnant and breast-feeding women to access nutrition screening and treatment.