

UK calls for early intervention to address growing humanitarian crises caused by climate change

Up to 216 million people may be forced to abandon their homes by 2050 due to the effects of climate change, according to the Global Humanitarian Overview 2022 (GHO) which was launched at a virtual event co-hosted by the United Kingdom and United Nations today (2 December 2021).

The GHO sets out humanitarian needs across the globe annually. In 2022, 274 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection, an increase of 39 million people from 2021.

With a growing number of crises linked to climate change, the UK is investing in earlier interventions to prevent further suffering, reduce growing humanitarian needs and ensure funding goes further and is calling on other countries to do the same.

The UK has invested heavily in early warning systems, which enable a quicker, more effective humanitarian response. For example, in response to Cyclone Eloise which struck southern Africa this year, UK aid funded specialist flood risk assessments, compiled by a consortium including the Universities of Reading and Bristol, which helped humanitarians anticipate which areas were likely to be hit the hardest and to better plan the delivery of aid supplies and staffing.

Speaking from the virtual launch, Minister for the Middle East and North Africa, James Cleverly said:

We are now facing the combined effects of conflict, climate and COVID-19 which are driving several humanitarian crises around the world. With needs rapidly outstripping available resources, it is vital we find new means to meet these challenges.

Innovation, data and technology are at the heart of tackling these issues, and acting early. The UK is a leader in this area, using our world-class capabilities to ensure aid agencies are able to plan and prepare for disasters, improving the chances of saving lives and reducing suffering.

The UK is also working with NGOs and partners to support more nimble and flexible responses to humanitarian crises. We supported the establishment of the Start Fund in 2014 and remain a major contributor to it, providing rapid financing to prepare and respond to underfunded crises. The UK-based Fund enables finance to be delivered to NGOs within 72 hours of a crisis hitting, ensuring those on the ground can deliver help to where it is needed quicker. Through the British Red Cross, the UK also supports the IFRC's Disaster

Relief Emergency Fund and Forecast Based Financing, which releases rapid funds to help National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to carry out their unique role preparing for and responding to disasters.

In addition to providing quicker and smarter humanitarian support, the UK is helping to deliver climate-resilient infrastructure through the Clean Green Initiative. For example, the UK has funded over £60 million in seismic and hurricane-resilient infrastructure in Anguilla following Hurricane Irma in 2017. This has supported the island's only hospital, three clinics, five primary schools and a major new secondary school to be re-built to international standards. The new infrastructure will also be fitted to use solar power in the future.

UK aid is also supporting a wider SMART hospitals project, which aims to strengthen health facilities to make them more resilient to climate change and natural disasters. Separately, through the UK Caribbean Infrastructure Fund (UKCIF), UK support will help to build around 15 major climate resilient economic infrastructure projects, including improved roads, water and electric supplies and ports to make them better able to withstand natural hazards.

Background

- The Global Humanitarian Overview (GHO) is the world's most comprehensive, authoritative and evidence-based assessment of humanitarian need. Produced by UN OCHA, it provides a global snapshot of the current and future trends in humanitarian action for large-scale resource mobilisation efforts, and explores opportunities to more effectively deliver humanitarian assistance.