

# UK secures G7 action to tackle global challenges and threats

The UK brought together foreign and development ministers from G7 countries, as well as guests from the Indo-Pacific region and Africa, this week for decisive co-ordinated action on shared global challenges and threats.

The first face-to-face meeting of foreign ministers in over two years combined the UK's diplomatic and development expertise to help deliver progress on the UK's overall G7 Presidency goal of building back better from the Covid-19 pandemic. The Leaders' Summit takes place in Cornwall next month.

Following two days of constructive talks, the group of like-minded nations reached a powerful agreement to work together to defend democracy, uphold basic freedoms and human rights and step up support to protect those hardest hit by crises such as Covid-19, climate change and famine.

At the meetings, which took place in London, G7 countries agreed to:

## **Tackle the biggest geopolitical threats by:**

- calling out the concerning Russian troop build-up on Ukraine's border
- agreeing tough, further measures on Myanmar if the military refuses to change course
- committing to future support for the Afghan Government, conditional on progress on the peace process
- setting out a united, balanced approach on China with the strongest condemnation yet of human rights abuses in Xinjiang, G7 commitment to tackle forced labour camps and calling out China's coercive economic practices.

## **Safeguard democracy though:**

- more action on defending media freedom around the world by local G7 diplomatic missions, backed by increased funding to the Global Media Defence Fund
- bolstering our Rapid Response Mechanism, including through a new NATO partnership that will counter threats like vaccine disinformation
- G7 collaboration to deter the abhorrent practice of arbitrary detention, including a new Canadian-driven Action Plan.

## **Support a sustainable recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and help those hardest hit by crises through:**

- landmark collective action to improve access to life-saving vaccines
- two new ambitious girls' education targets: 40 million more girls in school by 2026 and 20 million more girls reading by the time they leave primary school
- agreement to invest \$15 billion to support women with new economic

opportunities

- a new famine prevention and humanitarian crises agreement – mobilising collective diplomatic action to promote international humanitarian law and collectively contributing over £5bn in humanitarian aid to the 42 countries one step away from catastrophe or famine
- a commitment to make people safer from climate disasters, through early warning, better preparedness and early action
- actions to scale up the finance needed to help countries adapt to the impacts of climate change.

2021 marks a crucial year of international leadership for the UK. In addition to the G7 Summit in Cornwall next month, later this year we will host COP26 in Glasgow. In July we will host the Global Education Summit to help drive action towards the newly agreed global targets to get 40 million more girls into school, and 20 million more girls reading by age 10, by 2026, in low and lower-middle-income countries.

#### **Notes to editors:**

Guests in attendance were India, Australia, the Republic of Korea, South Africa and the Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

**Vaccines Access:** The UK has agreed a statement with G7 countries outlining collective actions to strengthen global vaccine access. This includes action to increase funding for COVAX – the scheme to ensure vaccines are made available to all – and endorsing COVAX as the primary way for countries to share vaccines globally. G7 countries also committed to work with industry to expand manufacturing at scale of affordable Covid-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics and avoid disruptions to the supply of Covid-19 products, like oxygen, needed for humanitarian purposes.

**Famine Prevention:** The G7 agreement commits G7 nations to urgently provide an initial £5 billion in humanitarian assistance to 42 countries at risk of catastrophe or famine, with further funding to follow over the course of this year. The initial funding includes £1 billion in aid prioritised to the three countries at greatest risk – Yemen, South Sudan and Nigeria – to be provided as soon as possible to save lives. The support will ensure people have access to food, clean water and sanitation, that children have access to lifesaving malnutrition treatment and that all civilians are protected from violence. The G7 will also continue to lobby for safe humanitarian access for aid workers to ensure humanitarian support reaches those who urgently need it, particularly those in hard to reach areas and conflict zones. The G7 committed to supporting the World Bank Group and UN preparedness and early action work to ensure the international community acts to prevent crises as well as respond to them

**Climate resilience and adaptation:** The UK is using its COP26 Presidency to encourage greater action to help vulnerable countries build resilience to the impacts of climate change, from early warning systems to reduce suffering from climate-related disasters, to drought-resistant crops to cope with changing weather patterns and rising temperatures. G7 partners committed to do more to support vulnerable countries to improve their planning and

response to disasters including by pre-agreeing emergency funding so that they can react immediately when disaster strikes.

G7 members also recognised the responsibility of private finance and the private sector in building countries' resilience to climate change. Led by the UK's CDC Group, a group of Development Finance Institutions put forward plans to increase the investments they make that build resilience, as well as ensuring the investments themselves are resilient to climate risk.