

We must reach REAP's goal of making 1 billion people safer from disaster

Excellencies, friends,

On behalf of the governments of Saint Lucia and the UK and the Risk-informed Early Action Partnership – welcome to you all.

Thank you for joining today's important discussions to determine how to scale up early action on disasters.

We must reach REAP's goal of making 1 billion people safer from disaster by 2025.

Between 1970 and 2019, 79% of disasters involved weather, climate and water-related hazards.

70% of resultant deaths occurred in the Least Developed Countries.

Sadly, these events will only increase.

But increasing also is our ability to forecast and forewarn: over half of humanitarian needs stem from 'predictable' events.

But still only 1% of humanitarian finance is prearranged.

This is not good enough.

This is where REAP partners come in.

We are already seeing the benefits of early action.

But we must see early action mainstreamed, embedded into policy and plans.

As we heard at the Climate and Development Ministerial at the end of March, early action is a priority for developing countries.

So we must work together to make risk-informed early action the default position.

In 2019 the UK committed £175m to REAP targets. Since then, we have continued to provide expert technical support to REAP.

And the UK funds the REAP Secretariat, who brought us all here today, finding common solutions to global problems.

The UK is a contributor to the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF), including its Forecast-based Action window.

The UK is working with the British Red Cross to increase access to Forecast-based Finance, supporting early action in Southern Africa and the Sahel.

As one of the largest donors to UN OCHA's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), the UK supports its allocation of up to \$140 million to Anticipatory Action, tackling food insecurity in Ethiopia and Somalia, and flooding in Bangladesh.

The UK has invested in expanding disaster risk insurance, so that governments can access cover at reduced prices.

The African Risk Capacity (ARC) enables governments to insure against drought, and the ARC has provided \$500m in drought risk coverage, and \$64 million for early responses.

The UK is the largest contributor to the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA), which disbursed \$20m to support St Vincent and the Grenadines, to provide money fast after the recent volcanic eruption.

So today, the UK would like to demonstrate further commitments to REAP:

To advance progress on Target 1, the UK will fund work with a priority group of vulnerable countries, to review and integrate climate and disaster laws, policies and procedures.

Partners will develop robust and appropriate policy frameworks, and effective disaster risk management plans.

To advance progress on Target 2, we will provide expert support to strengthen and expand shock-responsive social protection.

Today we are committing an additional £12m to the Start Network's Start Fund, so that frontline actors can respond swiftly and ahead of underfunded humanitarian crises.

This money will enable Start Network to develop an innovative series of 'hubs' to improve forecasting and locally-led action.

A further £8 million will support the Centre for Disaster Protection to help climate-vulnerable countries to prepare for disasters.

Our progress relies on strong evidence:

The UK-funded Adaptation Research Alliance (ARA) will work with REAP to address research needs, ensuring that strong evidence underpins the fulfilment of targets.

REAP partners are invited to work with us, to ensure research benefits the end user.

Because as well as scaling up, REAP calls us to change how we manage risk.

The UK's FCDO is integrating a climate and environment risk assessment into all of its new programming.

The UK's G7 presidency has focused on anticipating shocks and acting early.

The UK secured G7 commitment to do more, by pre-agreeing emergency funding so that countries can act early.

The UK led the development of the G7 Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Crises Compact to increase anticipatory action and support to the CERF.

At the G7 in June, we hope to lead the way with more ambitious commitments to REAP targets.

At COP26 in November, we will demonstrate further investment in climate services and disaster risk reduction.

So now, it's over to all of you:

Those who have come forward to act on avoidable losses, and those who feel their impacts first-hand.

We look forward to hearing what you can offer this ambitious partnership,

Where you can make investments that make a difference,

And, indeed, how your experiences have led to change.

So, thank you to all of you for your collaboration, your commitment and your ambition for this lifesaving agenda.

I will now hand to my colleague Diann Black-Layne, Ambassador for Climate Change and Director of the Department of the Environment of Antigua and Barbuda. Welcome Diana, it will be wonderful to hear your reflections.

[New UK funding to boost climate disaster responses](#)

The UK has announced £12 million in new funding to support developing countries to better prepare for and respond to disasters, including those linked to climate change. The funds will go to the Start Network for rapid responses by charities to crises like droughts and floods.

A further £8 million will support the Centre for Disaster Protection to help climate-vulnerable countries deal with crises such as extreme weather caused by climate change and pandemics. This forms part of a wider £48 million package of climate support announced by the Foreign Secretary earlier this year.

Today's announcement came as the UK's International Champion on Adaptation and Resilience for the COP26 Presidency, Anne-Marie Trevelyan spoke at a meeting of the Risk-informed Early Action Partnership (REAP), urging the

international community to support vulnerable countries to better prepare for and prevent disasters.

The UK's International Champion on Adaptation and Resilience for the COP26 Presidency, Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

As climate-related disasters increase in ferocity and frequency we must take action to better prepare for and prevent them, to save lives, protect livelihoods and reduce suffering.

The commitment and ambition demonstrated today, including the UK's partnership with the Start Fund, is vital for reaching REAP's goal of making 1 billion people safer from disasters by 2025. As we count down to COP26, I look forward to working together to continue to scale up early action worldwide.

Between 1970 and 2019, almost 80% of disasters worldwide involved weather, climate and water-related hazards. From these disasters, 70% of deaths occurred in developing countries – with droughts and floods the deadliest and most costly events.

The severity and frequency of these events is increasing across the globe as climate change worsens. But with investment, countries can be better prepared for disasters and reduce their impacts.

COP26 President-Designate Alok Sharma said:

The Risk-Informed Early Action Partnership is aiming to make one billion people safer from climate disaster by 2025. Today's event is important in showing how we need to scale-up and improve early warning and I am pleased the UK Government has announced an additional £12m to support these actions in developing countries to minimise, avert and address loss and damage.

So, whether through new investments, sharing good practice, or placing early action at the heart of plans and policies, we need to work together ahead of COP26 to build a safer, more resilient world.

The £12 million new UK aid funding is focused on taking early action to address humanitarian crises and will help local and frontline responders anticipate and respond swiftly to protect lives and livelihoods.

Through the Start Network, UK funding will support early action initiatives, from improved forecasting for heatwaves in Pakistan to drought in Madagascar, as well as a new global network of hubs facilitating locally-led responses

when disasters do strike.

The announcement follows the G7 Foreign and Development Ministers meetings in London last week, where G7 countries committed support to make people safer from climate disasters through early warning, better preparedness and early action, as well as agreed actions to scale up the finance needed to help countries adapt to the impacts of climate change.

In addition to new funding, the UK also announced a package of technical assistance through:

- A project with REAP to support climate vulnerable countries in implementing laws, policies and procedures to protect from future crisis risks;
- Closer working between REAP and the UK-established Adaptation Research Alliance to fill gaps in evidence for early action;
- Sharing UK social protection expertise to help ensure poverty reduction programmes are resilient to climate shocks.

Further information:

- The £12 million in new funding builds on the UK's ongoing support for Start Network and their membership of over 50 NGOs to anticipate and respond rapidly to under-the-radar and under-funded humanitarian crises around the world. This new funding will specifically support the network's rapid response fund, increasing humanitarian NGO forecasting capabilities, improving access to finance in anticipation of risks and the development of a network of hubs to facilitate better coordinated responses by local humanitarian responders.
- The £8 million funding for the Centre for Disaster Protection is part of the £48 million package of climate support announced by the Foreign Secretary in Nairobi on 20 January 2021. The Centre for Disaster Protection brings countries together with international development, humanitarian and private sector organisations to change how the world prepares, pays for and responds to disasters.
- The UK funds the REAP Secretariat and committed £175 million to REAP targets in 2019. The UK provides ongoing technical support from UK experts to design and implement REAP's plans to scale up early action worldwide. More information on REAP targets and members can be found at www.early-action-reap.org

Media enquiries

Email newsdesk@fcdo.gov.uk

Telephone 020 7008 3100

Contact the FCDO Communication Team via email (monitored 24 hours a day) in the first instance, and we will respond as soon as possible

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.

[Measuring the 'unmeasurable': research paper could help Dounreay clean up](#)

plutonium legacy

News story

Ground-breaking research published in Nature Communications shows that traces of plutonium in the environment can be identified as being from global or local sources.



Using soil samples taken from Dounreay, an area near to the site and 2 areas at a distance from the site, the research showed that it was possible to identify whether minute traces of plutonium in the soil came from plutonium 'bred' in a reactor or from global fallout.

The research was led by Professor Malcolm Joyce and colleagues from Lancaster University alongside Dr Jeremy Andrew from Dounreay and colleagues from ETH Zurich.

Jeremy said that the results could lead to considerable cost and time savings in the decommissioning of Dounreay and other Nuclear Decommissioning Authority sites, as areas of local pollution could be specifically identified, targeted and then assessed for clean-up if required.

He added:

This research demonstrates the benefits of close collaboration between nuclear decommissioning sites and academia. As well as the potential applications of this advanced method in characterisation strategy and planning, we have developed a better understanding of the applicability of a broad range of measurement capabilities, including those available in more routine radiological laboratories.

Published 11 May 2021

Government sets out plan to ban conversion therapy

News story

Following the Queen's Speech Tuesday 11th May, Minister for Women & Equalities, Liz Truss, has confirmed that the Government will take legislative steps to ban conversion therapy.



- Government announces plans to legislate the banning of conversion therapy.
- Commitment to ban the practice in the UK set out in Queen's Speech.
- New support fund to be created, offering substantial help to LGBT people impacted by conversion therapy.

Legislation will be introduced, protecting people from the coercive and abhorrent practice of conversion therapy in the UK.

Many forms of the practice are already prevented under current legislation, but this new ban will ensure that it is stamped out once and for all.

New funding will also be made available to increase the support available for victims of conversion therapy, the first time a government has offered this in the UK. This support is expected to be in place by summer.

Minister for Women & Equalities, Liz Truss, said:

“As a global leader on LGBT rights, this government has always been committed to stamping out the practice of conversion therapy.

“We want to make sure that people in this country are protected, and these proposals mean nobody will be subjected to coercive and abhorrent conversion therapy.

“Alongside this legislation, we will make new funding available to ensure that victims have better access to the support they need.”

As soon as parliamentary time allows, and following a consultation, the ban will be introduced in parliamentary legislation. The accompanying consultation will seek further views from the public and key stakeholders to ensure that the ban can address the practice while protecting the medical profession; defending freedom of speech; and upholding religious freedom.

Today's announcement furthers the UK's position as an international leader on LGBT equality, having legalised same-sex marriage and introduced one of the world's most comprehensive legislative frameworks for protecting LGBT people from violence and discrimination.

Published 11 May 2021