

PM to set out Government's action plan on the coronavirus outbreak

Prime Minister Boris Johnson will today (Tuesday 3 March) set out the Government's action plan to tackle the spread of coronavirus.

He will host a press conference in Downing Street to launch the plan, alongside the Chief Medical Officer Professor Chris Whitty and Chief Scientific Adviser Sir Patrick Vallance.

The new plan, agreed by all four parts of the UK, sets out how Ministers will take every reasonable step to confront the virus, consistent with the best scientific evidence, and ensure the Government is able to adapt quickly to changing circumstances.

Yesterday the Prime Minister brought together the Government's emergency COBR committee on the coronavirus outbreak, where attendees discussed, finalised and signed off the battle plan.

Later in the week, a major public information campaign will be launched setting out clear steps the public can take to limit the spread of the virus, including washing their hands regularly with soap and water.

A new Bill will be published in the coming weeks to ensure Government has all the necessary powers to prepare for and tackle the coronavirus outbreak.

New measures already set out as part of the battle plan include:

- Every government department having a designated Ministerial virus lead to oversee the response to the global threat of the virus, for instance on schools or businesses
- A war room set up in the Cabinet Office, bringing together communications experts and scientists from across government and the NHS to roll out the public information campaign `* Coronavirus being a standing item on the weekly Cabinet agenda, with the PM continuing to oversee the Government approach
- The option, should the virus spread, to encourage more home working and discourage unnecessary travel as part of a 'social distancing' strategy that could delay the peak of the outbreak until later in the year, potentially helping combat the virus in warmer weather conditions
- Looking at emergency registration of health professionals who have retired, the introduction of emergency indemnity coverage for health care workers to provide care or diagnostic services and relaxation of rules around staff to pupil ratios in education and childcare settings

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

It is highly likely coronavirus will spread more widely in the coming days and weeks, which is why we're making every possible

preparation.

We have agreed a plan, which I will set out in detail today, so if the virus should spread, we are ready to take necessary steps to contain it and protect the most vulnerable.

But we can all continue to do our bit to fight this virus – by washing our hands with soap and water for the length of time it takes to sing Happy Birthday twice.

The Prime Minister has also made a number of visits the last few days, including to:

- Kettering General Hospital – The PM met NHS frontline staff and saw their new coronavirus pod, a special sterile cabin outside the hospital, where people can come to be checked
- Public Health England's laboratory in Colindale – one of a number of labs across the UK where tests are carried out to confirm or rule out coronavirus
- The Royal Free Hospital – The PM met staff who are treating patients with the virus

[Making the UN fit for purpose to achieve the SDGs](#)

Thank you very much indeed, Mr Chairman.

Mr President and our two co-chairs, thank you very much for convening this discussion. Thank you very much for all the work you're putting into this important subject. We look forward to the discussions you've convened over the coming months as we prepare for this year's revitalisation process. And we look forward to working constructively to achieve the goals of revitalising the work of this important General Assembly.

As we all know, it's a significant year for the United Nations as it celebrates its 75th anniversary. This means we have an opportunity for the UN both to reflect on 75 years of cooperation that have got us where we are today and to renew itself to a new generation fit for purpose to tackle the challenges ahead.

As we enter the decade of action, we need to settle our ambitions high to realise the SDGs and fulfill our 2030 agenda. And now, more than ever, we

need a General Assembly that's fit for purpose, not just having a noble purpose, focused and action oriented.

To ensure the "future we want and the UN we need", in the United Kingdom's view, revitalisation needs to firstly address the proliferation of resolutions, high-level events and side events. It's clear that our ever increasing burden of work is unsustainable most notably, but not only, for small delegations.

Secondly, re-focus the GA's resolutions to be action-oriented and specifically linked to achieving the SDGs. Now is the time to act. It is the final opportunity for the international community to deliver the SDGs is on time.

Thirdly, to take steps to limit the number of GA resolutions that call for a report by the Secretary-General to promote sustainable and effective working methods.

And finally, work to make the UN a safer, more welcoming space for civil society and to promote youth engagement.

Mr President, co-chairs, we should ask ourselves why have we made little progress on these issues in recent years and whether we need to consider alternative approaches to inform our discussions. Successful revitalisation would facilitate a more effective, efficient and relevant General Assembly. It will not only reshape our ways of working, but also reinvigorate our engagement with the world around us and uphold the future of multilateralism. The United Kingdom is committed to the success of the UN and looks forward to engaging with colleagues in a positive and progressive revitalisation process this year. And you can count on us, co-chairs to support you and help you in your endeavour.

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[Opening of the First Resumed Session of the Fifth Committee](#)

Thank you Mr Chair,

At your request, I will not make the usual long list of thank yous, but would like to congratulate Guyana for assuming the Chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China and Mr Abdallah Bachar Bong on your appointment as Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. We trust that under your leadership we will receive the high quality, technical advice we need from the Advisory Committee to inform our discussions.

Mr Chair, The United Kingdom has left the European Union. We will therefore be negotiating from now on in a national capacity. We will remain an active member of this Committee and one of the strongest proponents of a strengthened, effective and efficient United Nations. 2020 is the UN's 75th anniversary. We want a United Nations that can respond effectively and agilely to challenges and deliver for the people it serves over the next 75 years. We have an opportunity to take decisions this session that will equip the United Nations in that regard.

The United Nations' success depends on its people – its most valuable asset. It needs therefore to invest in its people, including through effective performance management and developing the capabilities and knowledge they need to deliver – and to be an inclusive workplace where all staff feel valued, safe and motivated. The

United Nations' workforce should truly represent and understand the people it serves. That means looking beyond a definition of diversity based simply on nationality and gender. We hope the Committee will give strong support to the Secretariat's efforts to improve its human resources management policies and practices.

A strengthened culture of accountability throughout the Secretariat is central to a more effective United Nations. We welcome therefore the operationalisation of the Business Transformation and Accountability Unit.

Mr Chair, United Nations Police play a crucial role within UN missions, and complement the work of military and civilian personnel, including on Protection of Civilians. We look forward to discussing the Secretariat's review. It is crucial that we address issues around seconded personnel this session, to avoid putting at risk their important work. We want to see adequate and cost-effective resourcing for the UNAMID Peacekeeping mission in Darfur.

Finally Mr Chair, A cornerstone of this Committee is that on issues which fall within its purview we make sincere efforts within the Committee to strive for the broadest possible consensus. Sadly, in January we saw this principle undermined on ACABQ enlargement, despite the UK and others' commitment to engage in good faith in the Fifth Committee. There is no justification for such actions, which served simply to erode trust within this Committee. We hope to see a sincere effort to rebuild that trust.

Thank you

Millions more homes to be powered by renewables

- Measures to promote new renewable electricity generation projects launched
- Boost for supply chain, adding to the 20,600 jobs and £628 million of exports each year already supported by the renewables industry
- Tough new guidance for renewable energy developers to ensure local communities given more effective voice and make sure they have a definitive say on developments that affect them

Details of the next round of the Contracts for Difference scheme, which opens in 2021, have been set out today, Monday 2 March.

This latest round will be open to renewable technologies including onshore wind and solar, with proposals to include floating offshore wind. The scheme will also be changed to facilitate the deployment of energy storage.

Local communities will have a more effective voice on developments that impact them, through proposals for tough new guidance on community engagement for developers of onshore wind across Great Britain, also announced today. They will have a definitive say on whether projects are allowed to proceed. It will remain the case that no English onshore wind project can proceed without the consent of the local community.

The Committee on Climate Change have said that we need to quadruple renewable energy generation in the UK to reach net zero by 2050, and today's announcement is a step in that direction.

Secretary of State for Business and Energy Alok Sharma said:

Ending our contribution to climate change means making the UK a world leader in renewable energy.

We are determined to do that in a way that works for everyone, listening to local communities and giving them an effective voice in decisions that affect them.

RenewableUK's Chief Executive Hugh McNeal said:

The government is pressing ahead with action to meet our net zero emissions target quickly and at lowest cost to consumers and businesses. Backing cheap renewables is a clear example of the practical action to tackle climate change that the public is

demanding, and this will speed up the transition to a net zero economy.

Today's consultation outlines proposals to ensure the Contracts for Difference scheme can support the increased ambition required, including:

- making the UK a world-leader in new technologies such as floating offshore wind, which would allow wind farms to be built further away from the shore and increase clean energy capacity
- supporting our renewables supply chain to enhance productivity and increase competitiveness, boosting the UK's world-class clean energy industry
- improving the scheme to better support energy storage, so projects can provide power when the wind stops blowing or the sun is not shining

This is part of the Year of Climate Action, a defining year for our country and our planet, in the run up to the UK hosting the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in November.

The consultation is available [here](#) and closes on 22 May 2020.

Today's consultation invites views on the structure of the next allocation round, expected to open in 2021.

The rights of local communities across GB will be strengthened further through tough new guidance outlined in the consultation.