

Ensuring delivery of COVID-19 vaccines to people living through conflict and humanitarian crises

Colleagues,

May I first thank our briefers, Ted Chaiban, Dr Martiniez, and Dr Ojwang for their insightful and detailed briefings and for reminding us all that we are not out of the woods. The COVID-19 pandemic is still very much a reality for all of us. Together we have been battling the COVID pandemic for a little over two years.

It has been a time of great pain for all of us, but also a real expression of how far humanity has come on this journey together.

We have moved from having no vaccine at all, to having a steady supply of multiple vaccines.

The UK has committed £1.4 billion of UK aid to address the impacts of the COVID pandemic and to help end the pandemic as quickly as possible.

This also includes £829 million on global development, manufacture and delivery of COVID vaccines, treatments and tests.

Another good example was the UK-India partnership on vaccines has enabled over a billion people to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, saving lives and mitigating the spread of the pandemic globally. The Oxford University, AstraZeneca, and Serum Institute of India partnership combined the UK's leadership in Research and development and India's manufacturing capacity as the "pharmacy of the world".

Last month, the UK hosted the Global Pandemic Preparedness Summit which raised US\$1.5 billion funding for the Coalition of Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) to develop vaccines against new health threats in 100 days and rapidly scale-up regional manufacturing for affordable global supply.

The UK plays its part, through the COVAX Facility, to give access to vaccines, wherever they are needed.

We are among the largest donors to the Advance Market Commitment, committing half a billion pounds so far.

COVAX itself has now delivered over 1.4 billion vaccines to 144 countries, the majority of which are low- and lower-middle income.

Vaccination rates are also steadily increasing. But as we have heard already from our briefers, they continue to lag in many low-income countries, and in particular, communities in conflict and humanitarian crisis risk being left behind.

After more than a year of steady vaccine production, the challenge has moved from being one of supply, to a challenge of roll-out.

OCHA report that less than four percent of the populations of DRC, Yemen, Haiti and Burundi are vaccinated.

This, frankly put, is a staggering inequity that is bad for us all.

The delivery of vaccines to marginalised and conflict-affected communities is being obstructed by under-resourced and overstretched health systems, and by curtailed humanitarian access.

Last year this Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2565, calling for the provision of vaccines to areas in conflict. It gained the highest ever number of co-sponsors for a Council resolution.

What is clear: full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access, and the protection of health workers in line with International Humanitarian Law, remain vitally important, but elusive – a point amplified by Dr Martinez. So what more can we do to ensure the most vulnerable are not left behind?

First, we can help ensure that COVID vaccination is prioritised by governments in countries in conflict.

We can offer support through the COVAX humanitarian buffer: a measure of last resort to target individuals in fragile regions not included in national vaccination plans.

We can also support efforts to strengthen international cooperation. COVAX has recently set up a new Vaccine Delivery Partnership to improve coordination at global and country level, including with the African Union, for COVID vaccine delivery and support, including in the most vulnerable countries, most of which are in Africa – and our expert briefers again outlined this very point.

Second, we can spell out to all parties to conflicts, their obligations under International Humanitarian Law to provide unhindered humanitarian access, including for vaccinations. This must happen.

Third, we must work together, and as the United Nations, to overcome obstacles to delivery, and to advance Sustainable Development Goal 3 and our collective efforts to build stronger health systems worldwide. Dr Ojwang also stressed the importance of leveraging networks in country through his own experience in South Sudan. I welcome the important role, as Dr Ojwang highlighted, of faith leaders who have also been brought on board.

In conclusion, resolution 2565 continues to be an important roadmap for our discussions on vaccines and health in conflict zones.

COVID-19 has showed us that the best way to achieve success is by collaboration and working together. This resolution represents an investment in stability and global health, not just for individual countries but for the world – and as such, must remain a top priority for us all.

A modern partnership between countries that share values and objectives

On her first visit to Zambia since her appointment as Minister for Africa, Vicky Ford saw how the UK is supporting Zambia's education system in order to further remove the barriers preventing children – especially teenage girls – from accessing formal education.

The Minister visited Mulola School in Kapete District, where she saw how international support on sanitation, nutrition and sexual and reproductive health is important to removing the non-financial barriers that can prevent the poorest from getting the education they need.

Minister Ford also launched British Investment International (BII) in Zambia, in conjunction with the BII CEO Nick O'Donohoe. BII is the new British development finance institution that will invest billions in infrastructure and technology in low and middle income countries across Asia, Africa and the Caribbean.

During the launch, she announced that the UK mining company Moxico Resources is going to invest an additional \$100m in developing its Mimbula and Kalengwa mine projects and that, through InfracoAfrica, UK aid would be used to increase access for Zambian households and businesses to clean, green energy.

Minister Ford said:

Over the past 2 days, I've seen the breadth of the partnership between the UK and Zambia. Amongst many areas, our governments are working together to improve the lives of those in poverty and, increasing the opportunities for both Zambian and UK companies to invest in Zambia's growing economy.

Zambia's long history of supporting peace and democracy continues today. The resounding vote for respect of human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law that millions of Zambians made last year has demonstrated yet again, their country's position as a beacon of peace and democracy in the region and beyond. I'm committed to our 2 nations, the UK and Zambia, continuing to work together on protecting and promoting our shared values in the international sphere.

Through the launch of British International Investment here in Zambia, we have sent a strong message of the UK government's commitment to building a stronger, more diversified Zambian economy. Equally, it has been my pleasure to learn more about the steps being taken by the Zambian government to deliver free

education to all, and discuss how the UK continues to actively support better futures for all Zambian children.

Minister Ford attended a briefing at Lilayi Elephant Sanctuary to hear how the UK is supporting Zambian efforts to tackle the illegal wildlife trade, through the UK Army's training of wildlife rangers at Zambia's Kafue National Park in anti-poaching techniques.

The Minister paid a condolence visit on Thandiwe Banda, following the recent passing of Zambia's 4th President, Rupiah Banda. During the visit, she reflected on Rupiah Banda's long public service and his role in supporting Zambian democracy, particularly during last year's election.

In a meeting with President Hichilema, Minister Ford reiterated the UK's commitment to continue working with Zambia in the areas where the countries have shared values and priorities. In particular, she noted how Zambia and the UK had stood united in condemning the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

During her visit, the Minister met with the Foreign Minister, Hon Stanley Kakubo, as well as the leader of the opposition and representatives from the Zambian business community.

The visit to Zambia was part of a regional visit by Minister Ford and included visits to Malawi and Tanzania.

[Deputy Trade Commissioner for Latin America visits Paraguay](#)



Meeting with Ministers Raúl Cano and Raúl Silvero, from the Paraguay Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The visit focused on strengthening trade relations. It reaffirms the commitment of the British government to increasing bilateral trade with Paraguay.

The Department for International Trade Paraguay and the British Embassy in Paraguay put together an encompassing agenda. The programme included meetings with Paraguay government, unions and British-business stakeholders.

Meeting with Vice Minister Pedro Mancuello, from the Paraguay Ministry of Industry and Trade.

Deputy Commissioner Mahony had the opportunity to meet with representatives of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Industrial Union of Paraguay.

The agenda also included meetings with representatives of British companies and subsidiaries in the country. The visit ended with a social gathering with the Paraguayan-British Chamber of Commerce.

Dinner with the Paraguay-British Chamber of Commerce

Dinner with the Paraguay-British Chamber of Commerce

A key point of interest is to share the UK's potential for technological innovation and sustainability. One of the most recent investments British-stakeholder investment comes by the hand of ATOME Energy PLC. The venture estimates an input of USD 550 million for the production of green hydrogen and ammonia in Paraguay.

Commissioner Mahony personally thanked all hosts and reflected on his time in Paraguay [in his LinkedIn profile](#). On trade and new technologies, Commissioner Mahony said:

The UK is a powerhouse in areas such as the use of hydropower, solar energy or biomass. We also have expertise in more sustainable technology in agriculture, hydropower, health diagnostics and cyber security.

We are excited to share this with Paraguay.

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1. 12 April 2022

Erratum: incorrectly stated that Deputy Commissioner Mahony met with the Rural Association of Paraguay. Due to last-minute changes to the programme, this meeting could not take place.

2. 11 April 2022

[DfT appoints Nick Denton to new independent aviation panel](#)

- new independent aviation panel launched to drive forward best practice of regulatory processes at the Civil Aviation Authority
- Nick Denton, current Traffic Commissioner for the West Midlands, chosen by ministers to be appointed to the panel
- the panel will be fully operational from 2 May 2022

The Department for Transport (DfT) has today (11 April 2022) announced the first appointment to a new independent aviation panel created to strengthen transparency around decision-making and regulatory processes at the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Nick Denton, current [Traffic Commissioner for West Midlands](#), has been selected by ministers following a diligent recruitment process run by DfT.

He brings expertise in investigative processes and procedures following many years working as a Traffic Commissioner and, before that, in the civil service.

The panel is fully independent and impartial of the CAA and is available to review eligible decisions made by the CAA, which is responsible for the regulation of aviation safety, use of airspace and the licensing and financial fitness of airlines, among other things.

The panel will be open to review eligible decisions taken after 2 May 2022.

It will soon be open to individuals whose cases meet a certain threshold if they remain unsatisfied following the CAA's new internal review process.

Eligible decisions cover personnel licensing and certification decisions, such as those following an airspace infringement or the decision to suspend a licence or endorsement to an instructor or examiner.

The panel will consider whether the CAA correctly followed its processes and procedures in arriving at a decision. It will have the power to remit the case back to the CAA where it investigates and considers the CAA has not done this.

Aviation Minister Robert Courts said:

The UK aviation sector is world-leading, in part because of our

high standards in training and regulation. We want everyone to feel fairly treated, which is why it is so important to have this panel.

Under Nick's leadership as the independent reviewer, we will continue to have a thriving independent aviation sector.

Sir Stephen Hillier, Chair of the UK CAA, said:

The CAA warmly welcomes Nick Denton to his new role as the independent reviewer of how the CAA has made decisions that affect individuals.

As the UK's independent aviation safety regulator, we always strive to make decisions properly and with safety interests to the fore. This additional layer of review will add more transparency to our processes for making those decisions, help ensure that we continually improve the quality of our service and build further trust between the CAA and those that we license.

Nick Denton, Traffic Commissioner, said:

I'm very pleased to be appointed to the panel and to offer my expertise in reviewing cases with a fair, proportionate and independent eye, as I have done up to now in my Traffic Commissioner role.

Decision-making processes must be understandable and transparent to those whom they affect and people need to be confident that they have received fair treatment. I will do my utmost to ensure that the panel achieves these outcomes.

An important aspect of the UK and international aviation safety system is that the regulatory authority has the responsibility for safety-related decisions. Therefore, the CAA will remain the ultimate decision-maker.

In the exceptional event that the CAA chooses not to reconsider a case in light of a recommendation to do so from the panel, it will need to explain its rationale to the complainant, the panel and the Minister for Aviation.

More information about the panel, including its terms of reference, will be made available on GOV.UK and the CAA website in May.

Appalling attack on Kramatorsk railway station on 8 April 2022: UK statement to the OSCE

Mr Chair, it is not even a week since our last Special Permanent Council was held to address the atrocities committed by invading Russian forces in towns such as Irpin and Bucha. And since our last Permanent Council on Thursday, we gather here again – in shock and horror – following the news from Kramatorsk. Two missile strikes in the middle of the day on a crowd reported to be over a thousand people waiting for trains to escape Russia's onslaught. Strikes on a station whose role in this evacuation has been noted around the world. Over fifty people – innocent civilians – women, men, and children – reported killed in this barbaric attack, and over 100 injured.

One further horrific act in this premeditated, unjustified invasion by Russia of Ukraine. One further incident involving innocent civilians.

As we have come to expect, the Russian disinformation machine immediately kicked into work. The Russian government continue their futile attempts to distract and deflect us from their own actions through their blizzard of lies. It has not succeeded over the past 7 and a half weeks and it will never succeed.

Mr Chair, the world continues to watch, and we continue to take concrete steps in response to Russia's brutal, unjustified and illegal invasion against its sovereign, democratic neighbour. Last week, [the UN General Assembly voted to suspend Russia's membership of the UN Human Rights Council](#). We are awaiting the [OSCE's Moscow Mechanism Report](#) to release the first initial examination of alleged war crimes in Ukraine. And this is only the start.

[An International Criminal Court \(ICC\) investigation is already underway](#). UK Government Departments are working closely together to identify and collate evidence of atrocities so that we, alongside international partners, can assist the investigation. Those responsible for the atrocities that have been committed in Ukraine will be held accountable. Mechanisms are being created to bring perpetrators to justice. Soldiers and commanders who issue or follow illegal orders should know that their actions are being broadcast around the world. Mr Chair – we are watching; we are documenting; and we will not forget. Justice will be served.

Mr Chair – We will use all the tools available to us to ensure that President Putin fails in his war of choice. The UK has imposed further sanctions on Russia. [On 6 April, we announced a full asset freeze on Russia's largest bank and an end to all new UK outward investment into Russia](#). We also announced an end to all imports of Russian coal and oil by the end of 2022. These measures have been delivered in lockstep with our global allies. Collectively, we are implementing the strongest set of economic sanctions ever imposed, to deprive

the Russian government's war machine of funds.

Mr Chair, as the Prime Minister said on Friday at the Stand-up for Ukraine pledging conference, 'President Putin has inflicted the worst humanitarian crisis in Europe since 1945'. Faced with this horror, and in solidarity with of Ukraine, our Prime Minister visited Kyiv on Saturday to emphasise our unwavering support for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people, whose profound courage in the face of adversity inspires us all.

Thank you Mr Chair. I request that you attach this statement to the journal of the day.