

## **UK statement at the 4th General Assembly of the Sahel Alliance in Nouakchott**

Ministers, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

I would like to thank the *Alliance Sahel*, the Spanish Presidency, incoming German Presidency, the World Bank Vice-President, and the Mauritanian Government for today's important event.

I welcome the focus on Climate, Security and Development given the exacerbating impact climate change has on peace, security and development and the pressing need to improve access to climate finance for the region.

Climate change and environmental degradation are disproportionately affecting the Sahel. They compound existing vulnerabilities and exacerbate existing conflict drivers. We are regrettably familiar with the devastating impacts. Crops lost due to extreme weather conditions. Populations displaced by food insecurity. An increased risk of conflict between herders and farmers over access to water or pastures.

The World Bank estimates that up to 13.5 million people across the Sahel could fall into poverty due to climate change-related shocks by 2050 if urgent climate adaptation measures are not taken. I have three points:

**First, the UK is committed to supporting resilience in the Sahel region by driving support to shock-responsive social protection.**

The UK is providing £19.5 million to the World Bank's Sahel Adaptive Social Protection Trust Fund and to the Centre for Disaster Protection.

This support will help strengthen adaptive social protection systems and improve people's resilience to shocks, including those driven by climate. During the current phase, over 150,000 vulnerable households have benefited from cash transfers to help them deal with shocks, thanks to the programme's support.

Programmes like this one are important to help reduce the need for emergency humanitarian support for recurrent shocks.

**Second, to achieve sustainable development, climate must be a central consideration in all development, humanitarian and security efforts.**

Climate resilience and adaptation should inform and influence our understanding and the design of all programmes that we support. Governments and international partners will need to adopt climate-sensitive responses that combine hard security with critical development needs, governance reforms and political dialogues that address all conflict drivers – including those affected by climate change.

The UK is investing £19 million over 5 years on conflict prevention in Mali and Niger, through a focus on land conflict, combining local conflict resolution, increased inclusion in land allocation processes, and community-based restoration of degraded

agricultural and pastoral land and sustainable farming activities. We are keen to share findings and coordinate with Sahel Alliance and other partners around this work.

**Finally, we must have better information to support efforts that anticipate climate risks and build resilience.**

The UK will launch the “Weather and climate Information and Services for Africa” programme this year to improve the uptake of weather and climate information services by working with Practical Action, Red Cross Red Crescent and the World Meteorological Organisation.

Up-to-date and localised climate information will inform strategic planning, quality management and national frameworks for climate services, including here in Mauritania.

By driving shock-responsive social protection, placing climate at the heart of development, security and humanitarian work, and providing access to better weather and climate information, the UK intends to support our collective efforts to create longer-term resilience particularly for those most vulnerable to the potentially devastating impacts of climate change, while promoting sustainable development and tackling insecurity.

**THANK YOU**