Good morning everybody. It’s a great pleasure to be here and to be addressing this vital and important issue at this great conference, which we should all thank the Saudi authorities for convening and bringing so much expertise into one place to discuss this vital issue.

I’d also like to thank our moderator here today from the brilliant British thinktank the ODI, the Overseas Development Institute, which do so much to contribute to international development thinking around the world.

As we learnt yesterday and as this conference has so eloquently shown, the key issues here are the link between the humanitarian spend and resilience and mitigation so that address the problems that are forthcoming on such a regular basis in the humanitarian space, and are able to do something to give people greater resilience next time these disasters affect us.

Let us take this opportunity to reflect on both the challenges and the opportunities for scaling up anticipatory action, considering how we can prevent and mitigate the impacts of humanitarian crises on the most vulnerable people.

First, let us take a moment to reflect on the current context.

Global food insecurity and the risk of famine is greater than it has been for decades, driven by conflict, COVID-19 and climate change. The auspices for 2023 are not good, there are already many ominous signs.

Nearly 800,000 people are experiencing famine-like conditions in countries including Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Somalia, and South Sudan.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has exacerbated pre-existing crises, and we have just seen the terrible earthquake in Turkey and Syria, and the further events overnight.

Global needs are at a record high and there is a growing gap between these needs and the available funding.

Humanitarian action is a key UK priority and has been for many years. We care deeply about this in the UK, as of course many other countries do around the world.

In respect of the earthquake in Turkey and Syria, in just a few days the British public have raised nearly £90 million, $110 million themselves for the [Disasters Emergency Committee appeal](https://www.dec.org.uk/appeal/turkey-syria-earthquake-appeal).

Our vision is to do 3 things:

* prioritise effective assistance for those in greatest need
* protect civilians, marginalised people and especially women and girls, and
* prevent, anticipate, and prepare for future crises, rebuilding resilience in protracted and recurrent crises

A key part of our approach is working with the international system and our partners to act ahead of conflicts, climate shocks and famines. Coordination across the humanitarian sector is essential and our duty to those who we seek to serve.

I’d like to touch on 3 key priorities here:

First, building a more coordinated approach, shifting towards more anticipatory action and preventive instruments. In other words, building resilience and mitigation as we spoke about in the first session yesterday. This will help better manage and anticipate humanitarian emergencies – including in in situations of protracted crisis and conflict.

The UK is supporting this shift through the support we have given to the UN Central Emergency Response Fund, which is pioneering initiatives on anticipatory action. This is a fund which was invented by the UK some 15 years ago and more than $1.7 million have been donated to it by the British taxpayer.

We are also supporting the Red Cross community, and it was a pleasure to see the ICRC lead Robert Mardini here yesterday, and the START network to strengthen anticipatory approaches to humanitarian assistance.

This is complemented by our contribution to the Risk Informed Early Action Partnership, which I know Ben Webster will talk about later.

We also need to build effective Disaster Risk Finance systems, linking fast pay-outs to early warnings to ensure the resources are there to act rapidly and pre-empt damage.

That is why the [UK committed £120 million at our G7 meeting in Carbis Bay to scale up disaster risk finance](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-g7-action-to-keep-people-safer-from-climate-disasters), and why we are playing our part in the Global Shield.

We are building systems to reach the poorest and expanding the use of disaster risk finance for humanitarian and food security responses. Many of these instruments have been developed in the London insurance market, and pooling risk for insurance is already an up and coming and effective support in this area.

Second, we need to bring our humanitarian, development, and climate efforts more closely together.

This includes harnessing the full range of funds across those 3 areas for programmes that build the resilience of vulnerable communities and support early warning and social protection systems.

Third, we want to unlock climate finance and money from the international financial institutions for the most vulnerable countries.

This will help scale up pre-emptive action and build their resilience in shocks. Remember the importance of partnership and technical assistance in achieving that, which underlines the importance of building up these extra buffers.

During its COP26 Presidency, the UK focused prominently on climate adaptation. The [Glasgow Pact](https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-glasgow-climate-pact-key-outcomes-from-cop26) demonstrates increasing ambition in preparing for and responding to climate impacts, scaling up early warning systems and heading off crises before they begin.

As we look to the future, we must continue to strengthen anticipatory action by increased coordination across our humanitarian, development and climate partnerships and financing, and by improving our analysis of need, helping the most vulnerable people and countries to access finance.

I hope that today will result in a shared commitment to actions that support this much-needed shift. This is how we can better support some of the world’s most vulnerable people in these deeply difficult times. This is our duty, our challenge and our opportunity.

It is now my pleasure to welcome our participants and pass over to Diana Janse, the Minister for International Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade from Sweden.