

ASEAN-UK joint event highlights nature's key role in climate action ahead of COP15 and COP26

On 8 June, the UK COP26 Presidency and the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) co-convened ASEAN-UK COP26: Framing the Future for Nature and Climate, a virtual event exploring the important role that ecosystems, like forests, wetlands, and marine and coastal areas, play in combatting climate change.

The event explored best practices and experiences from across the ASEAN region, and discussed the need to scale up ambition on nature-based solutions on climate and biodiversity. The event also showcased the findings of the Dasgupta Review on the Economics of Biodiversity, and the applicability of its findings to the ASEAN region.

The event was also an opportunity to bring the region together in preparation for the upcoming regional and global meetings, including the Third ASEAN Conference on Biodiversity, the 15th Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), all taking place this year, with the UK presiding over COP26, in partnership with Italy

The event drew over 500 participants, who were welcomed with a video message from renowned naturalist Sir David Attenborough, produced specifically for South East Asia. Deputy Secretary-General (DSG) for the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Kung Phoak, UK Ambassador to the Philippines Daniel Pruce, and ACB Executive Director and COP 26 Climate Defender Dr Theresa Mundita Lim opened the event. "Nature-based solutions play a very significant role in addressing the root causes of climate change, for instance, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions," DSG Kung Phoak said.

Dr. Lim explained that while the ASEAN region is among the most vulnerable to climate change, solutions are within its reach due to its wealth of biological resources and diverse ecosystems.

The integrity of these ecosystems contribute to adapting and mitigating strategies against the impacts of climate change – mangrove, peatland, and marine ecosystems help curb rising temperatures, avert disasters, and serve as carbon sinks as well.

Ambassador Pruce emphasised the need to scale up nature-based solutions in ASEAN to curb global warming and build resilience to climate impacts, through ending deforestation, and committing to protect 30% of global land and ocean by 2030.

"Nature-based solutions are vital in safeguarding our climate, air, water and way of life for future generations", the UK Ambassador said, citing that

nature is a priority under the UK's Presidency of COP26. The event featured thematic sessions on protecting carbon sinks and nature's role in climate adaptation, reducing emissions from unsustainable exploitation of nature in the region, and financing nature-based solutions

The event also featured a special fireside chat between Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta and Demetrio L. Ignacio (Former ASOEN Chair of the Philippines), where Professor Dasgupta advised ASEAN policymakers on applying the findings of the Dasgupta Review on the Economics of Biodiversity in an ASEAN context.

Representatives from Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Viet Nam shared reflections on the event, and showcased national action that they are taking in applying and scaling nature-based solutions.

The event closed with reflections from Mika Tan, Coordinator of the ASEAN Youth Biodiversity Programme; Dr. Nor Imtihan binti Haji Abdul Razak, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Development, Brunei; and Ken O'Flaherty, COP26 Ambassador to Asia Pacific and South Asia.

The recorded livestream of the sessions can be accessed on the [ACB's YouTube page](#)