

COP26 brings countries together to protect world's forests

- New initiative brings key countries together to work towards sustainable food supply chains
- Ministers from more than 18 countries come together to develop a route map for future international trade that will protect forests
- Over 10 million hectares of forest are destroyed through global commodity production each year

A new initiative to protect rainforests from further destruction whilst ensuring development and trade is sustainable has been kick-started by the UK today as hosts of the COP26 climate summit in November.

The UK today launched the Forest, Agriculture and Commodity Trade (FACT) Dialogue, which will bring together key countries exporting agricultural products and the countries consuming these products to discuss how to make this process greener and more sustainable.

COP26 President-Designate, Alok Sharma, was joined by ministers from more than 18 different countries, including Brazil and South Korea, to kick start this new initiative which will take collaborative action through 2021 to November's climate conference and beyond.

International trade in commodities like palm oil, soy and beef, provides over \$80bn per annum in export earnings for producer countries, and contributes to food security and economic growth in consumer countries. The sector supports 1.5 billion people who depend on it for jobs and livelihoods, many of them in developing countries. Forests continue to disappear at an alarming rate as a result of agricultural production and in some cases deforestation is increasing.

The FACT Dialogue aims to agree principles for collaborative action, a shared roadmap for the transition to sustainable supply chains and international trade, and to take action now to protect forests while promoting development and trade.

This comes as Professor Dasgupta publishes his review today, which calls for urgent and transformative change in how we think, act and measure economic success to protect and enhance our prosperity and the natural world.

COP26 President-Designate, Alok Sharma, said:

I am proud to bring together the countries that can make global trade more sustainable for everyone.

This is about working together to protect our precious forests while enhancing livelihoods and supporting economic development and food security, which is one of our key priorities as we work

towards COP26 in Glasgow later this year.

Also joining today's launch was the Dialogue's non-governmental partner, the Tropical Rainforest Alliance (TFA) who announced the creation of a Global Multi Stakeholder Taskforce on commodity trade. The taskforce will bring together over 25 leading figures working on sustainability who will channel their expertise and advise the governmental dialogues throughout the year.

Fabiola Muñoz, Coordinator of the Peruvian Coalition for Sustainable Production and Co-chair of the Global Multi-stakeholder Taskforce said:

We have a unique opportunity to do things differently, to listen to all perspectives and regions, and collectively build the solutions that will lead us to a forest-positive future.

Action to protect the planet's diversity and establish a sustainable future will require global collaboration across all society, from policy makers and industrialists, through to the individual consumers.

Protection of the environment is woven through the UN 2030 Sustainable Developments Goals which were agreed five years ago and Goal 15, Life on Land, speaks specifically to the sustainable use of ecosystems. The launch of the FACT Dialogue today and the establishment of the Global Multi Stakeholder Task Force represents a major step forward in international collaboration on this pressing issue.

International Environment Minister Lord Goldsmith said:

Forests around the world are being destroyed at a truly alarming and completely unsustainable rate, with severe impacts on nature, people and climate. The UK has a long and proud history of supporting action to combat deforestation and promote sustainable land use. Our new due diligence measure in the Environment Bill will clean up our supply chains by making it illegal for UK businesses to use key commodities produced on illegally deforested land.

As part of our Presidency of COP26, we are building a global alliance of countries committed to working together to tackle this important issue and this new dialogue will be instrumental in making this happen.

The event launch will be moderated by TV presenter, Julia Bradbury, and the musician, Nile Rogers, will also take part.

Ends.

Notes to editors

- The UK will host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow on 1 – 12 November 2021.
- The COP26 summit will bring parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- The UK is committed to working with all countries and joining forces with civil society, companies and people on the frontline of climate change to inspire climate action ahead of COP26.
- Further information on today's Dasgupta Review launch is available on [GOV.UK](#).
- The FACT launch event will be live streamed on the COP26 YouTube channel from 1100 on 2 February and will be available after the event. [Access the event here](#).