

PM steps up UK efforts to protect the Amazon rainforest

Boris Johnson will today announce new UK funding to help tackle deforestation in the Amazon, as part of a package of announcements to combat climate change and protect biodiversity and the environment.

The PM will make £10 million immediately available to help step up efforts to protect and restore the Amazon rainforest in Brazil – including in areas affected by the current fires.

The new funding builds on support the UK has already invested to restore the rainforest in Brazil and neighbouring countries, and will help safeguard the huge biodiversity of animal and plant species found in the Amazon.

In addition, the PM will announce that the UK is increasing its contribution to the Green Climate Fund whose projects safeguard forests and land – including in the Amazon, reduce emissions, and help people cope with the effects of climate change in developing countries.

The fund supports a number of programmes to preserve natural habitats around the world – including to tackle deforestation in the Amazon rainforest in Brazil.

The PM will underline that biodiversity and climate change are “two sides of the same coin” and must be addressed in tandem if we are to protect the planet. The destruction of forests and other habitats creates emissions that contribute to and accelerate the rate of climate change.

Ahead of today’s G7 session on climate change and the environment, PM Boris Johnson said:

In a week where we have all watched, horrified, as the Amazon rainforest burns before our eyes, we cannot escape the reality of the damage we are inflicting on the natural world.

The planet faces two immense threats: climate change and biodiversity loss. These are two sides of the same coin – it is impossible to solve one challenge without fixing the other.

We cannot stop climate change without protecting the natural environment and we can’t restore global nature without tackling climate change.

That is why I have decided that COP26 – if the UK is fortunate enough to host it next year – will have as a major focus the solutions to climate change that can be found in nature – such as reforestation.

The PM will use the G7 Summit to call for ambitious new targets to halt and reverse the tragic and unprecedented loss of habitats and species and to tackle climate change.

He will call for new international targets to restore the natural environment that are more ambitious than the existing Aichi biodiversity targets – which expire in 2020.

The PM will say these new targets should address the key drivers of biodiversity loss, and cover issues such as the protection and restoration of natural habitats, sustainable land use, the conservation of species, pollution, and the environmental damage caused by the introduction of non-native species into ecosystems.

Speaking ahead of his discussions with G7 leaders, the PM added:

Next year is a crucial one for the future of our planet. At the Biodiversity COP in China the Aichi targets must be replaced with new, more ambitious targets that help us get back the biodiversity we have lost.

The current global biodiversity targets have failed to stop the catastrophic decline in species. As the world's largest economies we owe it to all nations and to future generations to do better.

We cannot sit back as animals and plants are wiped off the face of the planet by mankind's recklessness. If we do not act now our children and grandchildren will never know a world with the Great Barrier Reef, the Sumatran tiger or the black rhino.

It is not good enough simply to halt the tragic and unprecedented loss of habitats and species – we must urgently reverse this appalling trajectory, before it is too late.

The Prime Minister will also urge countries to back Britain's call to protect 30% of the world's ocean by 2030 – to reverse the damage being done by overfishing, plastic pollution and climate change.

And he will pledge a further £7 million to extend our work to protect and manage vital marine ecosystems in conservation areas around Britain's overseas territories.

On the new funding for the Amazon rainforest, Business and Energy Secretary Andrea Leadsom said:

The fires devastating the Amazon rainforest are an absolute tragedy – we are ready to do all we can to protect them, both for future generations and as part of our international efforts to tackle climate change.

The £10million additional funding we're offering today will be invested in Brazil to restore the areas already destroyed and protect those habitats still intact – all while supporting those communities and businesses in the area to work together to secure its future.