

Press release: UK closes global wildlife conference with UK aid pledge to protect critical forest habitats

The UK has signalled its global leadership and commitment to tackling the Illegal Wildlife Trade with a landmark announcement of UK aid money to draw this week's conference to a close.

Today, the International Development Secretary has committed £35 million of UK aid to protecting critical forest habitats and species threatened by extinction, including the chimpanzee, gorilla, orangutan and tiger.

The further package comes after a week of eye-catching commitments from DFID, which has pledged to tackle the scourges of the Illegal Wildlife Trade, deforestation and wildlife extinction while supporting the world's poorest communities to thrive.

International Development Secretary, Penny Mordaunt said:

"Around the world 1.2 billion people rely on forests and natural habitats for their livelihoods. For the thousands of such communities which benefit from industries like tourism, protecting the natural environment is a crucial development issue.

"UK aid-backed projects happening right now across the world, such as those we can announce today, are leading the global fight to protect the natural environment that we all love so much.

"We owe it to future generations to work together to end wildlife crime, to protect essential forest habitats and to bring the world's poorest communities out of poverty."

Through UK aid, the UK is driving new, sustainable approaches in some of the world's richest natural environments and most beautiful areas, which both protect the environment and provide quality, sustainable jobs to local communities.

Today's announcement echoes the International Development Secretary's comments earlier this week, when she encouraged the private sector to "lean in" and support the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

The fresh funding will secure the support of leading businesses and investors to back environmentally friendly business practices, which protect wildlife habitats and do not cause deforestation, including:

- In Ghana, UK aid is increasing sustainable cocoa production, benefiting up to 150,000 people while protecting the 31,000-hectare Bia National Park. We are supporting local communities through training to female farmers and providing start-up kits for local businesses. The Bia National Park hosts 62

species of mammal and 160 species of bird, including the Forest Elephant, Chimpanzee and Lovebird.

- In Ethiopia, DFID's support is helping to develop sustainably produced wild forest coffee, with potential to double the incomes for up to 23,000 farmers. Ethiopia's wild coffee region is the range of the endemic and endangered Ethiopian wolf, Nyala antelope and African lions.

Projects like these are illustrative of the 'win-win' approach championed by DFID, encouraging sustainable livelihoods whilst conserving some of the world's iconic and endangered species, which benefits us all.

Forests provide precious habitats for many critically endangered wildlife species. Loss of tropical forests is being driven by the cultivation of crops like palm oil, soya, cocoa and coffee, which account for over 70% of deforestation in developing countries. These crops provide jobs and livelihoods in poor rural areas in developing countries, but forest clearance is often illegal and damaging to the local environment.

Palm oil is used in many of our processed foods, soaps and cosmetics, soya is used to feed animals reared for our meat and cocoa is used to make the chocolate we love, and coffee is obviously a hugely popular drink across the world. The UK is now leading an approach where British consumers can continue to enjoy these products and resources, by supporting sustainable practices, jobs and businesses which protect forests.

A separate funding package will support a number of projects targeting the trade of wildlife products destined for Asia, where demand for illegally trafficked wildlife products such as Pangolin scales, furs and ivory are driving the illegal trade, causing wildlife to be slaughtered, forests to be felled and communities to be devastated.

These measures, part of an overall package of £2.5 million, will include a project which will expose illegal activities and drive investigations in the Congo Basin. Previous projects have already jailed over 1,500 significant wildlife traffickers to date.

NOTES TO EDITORS

- This announcement constitutes a new funding commitment of £33.5 million to DFID's Investments in Forests and Sustainable Land Use (IFSLU) programme, and £2.5 million of funding allocated from existing budgets in DFID's Forest Governance, Markets and Climate Programme (FGMC).

- DFID committed £60m to the IFSLU programme from 2015-20. Today's funding will extend the programme for a further three years (2020-23).

- DFID's FGMC programme is a ten year (2011-2021) programme which contributes to UK efforts to end illegal deforestation, ensure that forests contribute to sustainable development and tackle climate change. The final phase of funding (2018-2021) totals £87 million.

Notes on the further package of 'Demand Reduction' programmes

A separate support package will support a number of projects targeting the trading of wildlife products into South East Asia, including:

- Exposing illegal activities and driving investigations in the Congo Basin – UK aid will expand the work of the Eagle Network in the Congo Basin (Cameroon, Gabon and Rep. of Congo) whose work has jailed over 1,500 significant wildlife traffickers to date. They will work with governments and civil society monitors to drive investigations, prosecutions and expose criminals publicly. This can reduce illegal logging and protect Chimpanzees, Forest Elephants and Mandrills.
- Strengthen international regulations governing the trade in endangered species – working with Forest Trends and the Environmental Investigation Agency to link efforts tackling IWT with the successful tactics, which have cracked down on the trade in illegal timber to support the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
- Training law enforcement and boosting cooperation between South East Asian and African countries – working with the Global Environmental Institute (GEI), WWF UK, and Traffic to train enforcement officers in Cameroon, Gabon and the Republic of Congo, to allow information sharing and joint enforcement operations for both the timber and wildlife trade in areas with Gorilla, Leatherback Sea Turtle and Bonobo habitats.
- Tackling illegal deforestation and wildlife crime in the Mekong, Central Africa and Indonesia – working with the Wildlife Conservation Society to sustainably manage over 8 million hectares of forests and 50,000 forest-dependent households by supporting tougher standards on the timber trade and improving the governance of forests and wildlife, including by working with agricultural companies to support sustainable jobs. Wildlife such as the Asian Elephant, Asian Rhino and Sun Bear depend upon habitats in the Mekong.
- Tracking illegal trade networks between Africa and South East Asia – with the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), we will research and map trade networks from African countries to South East Asia, and work with local civil societies and anti-corruption institutions to expose illegal routes and practices. In 2016 the EIA exposed \$1.9 billion of illegal trade in Siamese Rosewood.