

Tackling deforestation by working together ahead of COP26

Greetings.

And welcome everyone to the Forest, Agriculture and Commodity Trade Dialogue.

Thank you so much for joining us today.

Friends, as COP26 President, I have one very clear aim: and that's to put the world on track to make the Paris Agreement a reality.

And it is evident that we cannot achieve that unless we deal with the vital issue of deforestation.

Around the world, we are seeing forests depleted and biodiversity vanishing at a terrifying rate, driven by the global trade in agricultural commodities.

Demand for such goods is putting immense pressure on the earth's forests, on which more than one and a half billion people depend on their livelihoods, and they are also having a devastating effect on our planet.

Land use is responsible for 23 per cent of total global emissions.

As I say, if we continue on this course, our Paris Agreement targets will slip out of reach,

And that will have devastating effects for people and of course for nature.

We will have temperatures soaring, seas rising and storms intensifying.

The Dasgupta Review, on the Economics of Biodiversity, published today, is very clear that our treatment of nature presents grave risks to our economies, livelihoods and well-being.

So we must act now to turn the tide.

But we must do so in a manner that supports those who depend on forests, prioritising their economic interests and development.

And ultimately, we all have a responsibility to act.

The UK is taking action.

We are contributing £3 billion over the next five years to support nature.

But what is vital to tackling this problem is cooperation, across borders and between sectors.

Working together, we can mobilise investment, and grow markets for sustainable production.

Markets that support both the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals.

To achieve this, producer and consumer countries must come together in the spirit of mutual respect, dialogue and collaboration.

Working hand in hand with business and civil society.

That is what we are doing today.

We hope these dialogues will establish long-term plans.

And result in practical, ambitious measures.

Which of course are then implemented by governments, business and civil society.

Today is just the start of the conversation.

And I look forward to working with all of you, ahead of COP26 and of course beyond.

To reform this vital trade.

To protect livelihoods.

And to help to put the Paris Agreement into practice.

Thank you.