

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.

£1 billion Future High Streets Fund expanded to 50 more areas

An additional 50 towns will benefit from the £1 billion Future High Streets Fund, Prime Minister Boris Johnson confirmed today.

Towns across England – from Dudley to Dover and Scarborough to Stockport – will join 50 successful areas already shortlisted to develop plans to reinvent their high streets.

The funding could be used by these areas to improve transport and access into town centres, convert empty retail units into new homes and workplaces, and invest in vital infrastructure.

The extension to the shortlist comes on the back of the £3.6 billion Towns Fund announced last month, which included an additional £325 million for the Future High Streets Fund, taking the overall Fund to £1 billion as the Government looks to drive forward local growth.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

Our high streets are right at the heart of our communities, and I will do everything I can to make sure they remain vibrant places where people want to go, meet and spend their money.

But with our town centres facing challenges, we're today expanding the High Streets Fund to support over 100 high streets to regenerate – backed by £1 billion of vital investment.

This scheme is going to reenergise and transform even more of our high streets – helping them to attract new businesses, boost local growth, and create new infrastructure and jobs.

Communities Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

High streets have a crucial role to play as we work to grow the economy of all parts of the country.

Our £1 billion Future High Streets Fund is key to delivering this, empowering local leaders to help transform their high streets and town centres as consumer habits change, by investing in housing, workplaces, infrastructure and culture.

Interest in the Fund has been huge, and with so many strong applications, I am extending the number of towns moving forward to the next phase and getting a chance to develop their proposals.

The government is going to level-up our regional economies and as Communities Secretary I am proud to be driving this agenda forward.

Successful candidates will progress to the second phase of the Future High Streets Fund and receive up to £150,000 to support the development of detailed project proposals that can be submitted for capital funding.

The [scheme](#) was launched in December 2018 and is a key part of the Government's plan to renew and reshape town centres and high streets in a way that drives economic growth and sustainably improves living standards.

A number of other measures have already been taken to support our high streets, including the creation of the High Streets Task Force to support local leaders in delivering ambitious plans.

Through the planning system we are helping to support changes to high streets, making it easier for them to adapt, with a wider range of retail, residential and other uses. The [Open Doors](#) pilot in five town centres is bringing empty shops back into use, by opening these to community groups who are offering services to the most vulnerable in our communities.

Small retailers have also seen their bills cut by a third thanks to business rates retail discount, worth an estimated £1 billion.

The [Great British High Street Awards](#) recognise and celebrate retailers and community groups who are working in innovative ways to keep town centres and high streets vibrant and strong. Shortlisted high streets were recently announced and voting for the Champion and Rising Star Awards is now open.

[Artificial Intelligence to end future holiday jams caused by roadworks](#)

- government to help bank holiday road users receive warnings on traffic jams caused by roadworks through revolutionary plans to open up data
- access to data on planned changes to the road network could lead to the next generation of navigational apps
- plans will give drivers the confidence to plan important trips without

the fear of being stuck in traffic, and reduce congestion, delays and air pollution

Motorists could soon enjoy quicker and easier getaways on bank holidays, as government announces plans today (26 August 2019) to open up data on planned changes to the road network, highlighting potential traffic jams up to months in advance.

Tech firms could soon get access to this data thanks to a review of legislation around Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) – the orders behind restrictions on the road network which allow for temporary roadworks or permanent changes to the road.

Companies will potentially be able to develop and enhance navigational apps powered by AI, warning drivers up to months in advance of planned disruption to routes and offering alternatives to help save time and money.

Minister for the Future of Transport George Freeman said:

As a road user, there is nothing more frustrating than discovering roadworks and getting stuck in traffic jams.

Today's announcement will help open up data, reducing congestion, pollution and frustration for road users.

Working with organisations including local authorities and the Connected and Automated Vehicle (CAV) sector, the department will look at introducing legislation to make it easier to access data around the predicted 50,000 yearly road closures building on the government's commitment to make travelling cleaner and greener, safer, easier and more reliable.

The review will support the government's [Future of Mobility Grand Challenge](#) by considering whether current legislation is fit to maximise the potential of future technologies. Evidence suggests that opening up TRO data could also help with route planning systems for self-driving vehicles, cementing the UK's position as a world leader in developing self-driving vehicle technology.

[PM meeting with Indian Prime Minister at G7: 25 August 2019](#)

The Prime Minister met Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the G7 Summit today.

The leaders agreed to further strengthen our bilateral partnership after Brexit – including by working more closely together to overcome barriers to trade and build on our economic ties.

They discussed the environment and agreed on the importance of tackling plastic pollution. The Prime Minister thanked Prime Minister Modi for his leadership on the critical issue of climate change.

They committed to continue our existing close cooperation on foreign policy and security issues.

PM meeting with European Council President at G7: 25 August 2019

The PM today met with European Council President Donald Tusk in the margins of the G7 summit in France.

The PM repeated that the UK will be leaving the EU on 31 October whatever the circumstances. We must respect the referendum result.

The PM said the UK would prefer to leave with a deal but the current Withdrawal Agreement will not get through Parliament.

The PM said the deal is anti-democratic. The people of Northern Ireland would have no say in rules covering large swathes of their economy and it would actually be harder for us to exit the new arrangement than it is to leave the EU itself.

The PM said we will work in an energetic and determined way to get a better deal and we are very willing to sit down to talk with the EU and member states about what needs to be done to achieve that.

The PM and the President also discussed foreign policy, including Iran and Russia, and stressed the importance of upholding the rules-based international system.

The PM said that, post-October 31, the UK will remain a close partner and strong ally of the EU.

The PM and President said they would both be attending the UN General Assembly next month and would meet again there.