

# Public urged to Plant For Our Planet in a new campaign launched today

- New initiative to get the country planting more trees and flowers launches on World Environment Day
- Drive to build back greener comes ahead of UK hosting global climate summit later this year
- The Wildlife Trusts, Woodland Trust, National Trust and others join the Government's call to get people, businesses and communities planting and protect nature

A new campaign aimed at inspiring the nation to get planting has been launched today (Saturday 5 June), helping us to build back greener and step up our efforts to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss.

The campaign – backed by green organisations such as The Wildlife Trusts, Woodland Trust, National Trust, Horticultural Trades Association and Royal Horticultural Society – is asking individuals and communities to play their part in helping reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and supporting nature recovery by planting flowers and trees, restoring community spaces and getting out into nature.

Whether it is planting a window box, flexing green fingers out in the garden or sprucing up a community space, the public are encouraged to #PlantForOurPlanet and share their story on digital channels and social media. From planting flowers for pollinators to a tree in a garden, or wider nature activities such as building insect hotels, vegetable patches or simply letting your grass grow, by encouraging more people to get involved in the campaign, everyone can play a part in helping to protect and enhance our natural environment.

This campaign, launched on World Environment Day, forms part of the Government's efforts to drive action to tackle the biodiversity crisis and work towards nature-based solutions ahead of several major international summits this year, including the G7 (which is being hosted in Cornwall), the upcoming UN Biodiversity Conference (Convention of Biological Diversity COP15), and the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26), which will be hosted in Glasgow later this year.

The world has an extraordinary opportunity at COP26 to come together to tackle climate change and reverse biodiversity loss.

Plant For Our Planet is a chance for the public to take part, planting flowers and trees, restoring a community space and getting out into nature.

Through thousands of individual actions, we want to send a simple message – we are in this together for our planet.

Green groups will also be able to nominate examples of outstanding individuals, groups or projects which showcase the benefits of planting and supporting nature – our “Nature Heroes”. These heroes will receive a personal letter from ministers to thank them for their efforts.

Other easy ways to get involved include joining an existing project, such as the National Trust’s ‘Blossom Watch’ or The Wildlife Trusts ‘30 Days Wild’. People can also plant trees through the Woodland Trust’s ‘Big Climate Fightback’.

**There are a variety of nature projects you can join. These include:**

To get involved and planet for our planet you can download the [Plant for our Planet partner pack here](#).

Today’s announcement builds on plans to boost biodiversity, protect our peatlands and create new woodlands as [set out recently by the Environment Secretary](#). This includes aims to treble woodland creation rates by the end of this Parliament guided by the Government’s new England Trees Action Plan, and aims to halt the decline of nature by amending the Environment Bill to require the Government to set and meet a new [legally-binding target on species abundance for 2030](#).

**Hilary McGrady, Director-General of the National Trust, said:**

The last year has reminded us how important nature is for our health and wellbeing. But just as we need nature, so nature needs us. And never more urgently than now. At the National Trust, we are establishing 20 million new trees on our land by 2030, including millions of blossoming trees, creating 25,000 hectares of new nature habitat, and restoring peatland across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Together we can make a huge difference, which is why we are delighted to support Defra’s Plant for our Planet campaign today.

**Joan Edwards, Director of Policy and Public Affairs at The Wildlife Trusts said:**

The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world and so every effort is needed to help wildlife recover. We must tackle the climate and nature crises head-on by deploying bold and ambitious restoration projects on land and sea at a large-scale – as well as through local community-led action. Initiatives like the Government’s Plant for our Planet help everyone to play a part in bringing back nature where they live as are charity challenges such as 30 Days Wild from The Wildlife Trusts, which is running throughout June and asks everyone to do one ‘wild’ thing a day.

Never has the need to restore nature and tackle climate change been more urgent – and people must be part of the solution.

**Dr Richard Benwell, CEO of Wildlife and Countryside Link, said:**

Our planet is in trouble, but we really can dig ourselves out of this crisis. Each action that adds to our natural world – every bulb, sowing, and sapling – is a step toward restoring our wildlife and beating climate change. This Government initiative to inspire community action could be a tremendous boost, if it comes in conjunction with strong legal protection for sites and species, and new laws to improve the State of Nature. So, spades at the ready, everyone! This is the year to plant the seeds of a greener future.

**Sue Biggs, Director General of the Royal Horticultural Society, said:**

Plants, gardens, and gardening play a vital role in protecting the planet and help mitigate the increasing threat of climate change and biodiversity loss.

As the UK's leading gardening charity we continue to support millions of members, gardeners, and visitors in finding ever more sustainable ways to garden and promote nature-based solutions that help combat climate change. I would strongly urge everyone to Plant for our Planet and play their part in making the UK a greener and more beautiful place.

**James Barnes, Chairman of the Horticultural Trades Association said:**

This initiative is a great way to harness the power of Britain's gardeners into a movement which puts the benefits of protecting our natural environment to the fore. With three million new gardeners joining since lockdown last year, alongside the 22million who already take part in the country's biggest hobby, the HTA is urging the great British public to seek advice and planting ideas from garden centres, nurseries and reputable online retailers and plant for the planet.

**Further Information:**

- To hear more about the campaign, share your activities, or to nominate a "Nature Hero", please contact [plantforourplanet@defra.gov.uk](mailto:plantforourplanet@defra.gov.uk)
- To get involved and plant for our planet you can download the [Plant for](#)

[our Planet partner pack here.](#)

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## [UK statement on detention and disqualification of Cristiana Chamorro by Nicaraguan authorities](#)

News story

The UK condemns steps taken to prevent Cristiana Chamorro from taking part in Nicaragua's presidential election and calls for free and fair polls in November.



The UK is concerned at the unacceptable steps being taken by the authorities in Nicaragua to prevent opposition leader and likely presidential candidate Cristiana Chamorro from taking part in November's presidential election. This development is the latest in a series of actions taken by the Nicaraguan authorities with the intention of depriving the people of Nicaragua of the right to choose their own political leaders and parliamentary representatives freely.

It is regrettable that the Nicaraguan government has not implemented recommendations made by the Organization of American States (OAS) for improvements to the electoral process in order to promote democratic conditions in the country. Instead, since 2018, the Nicaraguan government has introduced legislation that the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has stated undermines the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly.

The United Kingdom, together with partners in the international community, calls on the Nicaraguan government to implement the reforms they agreed with the OAS in 2017-2018 and, as a high priority, to put in place a transparent and robust electoral framework together with safeguards consistent with international standards ahead of elections later this year.

We look to the government in Nicaragua to take and support all steps necessary to uphold the rights of all Nicaraguan voters to exercise their right to vote freely, safely and without interference in those elections. We look to the government also to do all that is necessary to ensure that all political parties, their chosen candidates and their supporters are able to campaign freely and safely in advance of the elections, and to ensure that journalists and the media are allowed to operate without restriction and impartially.

## **Media enquiries**

Email [newsdesk@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:newsdesk@fcdo.gov.uk)

Telephone 020 7008 3100

Contact the FCDO Communication Team via email (monitored 24 hours a day) in the first instance, and we will respond as soon as possible.

Published 4 June 2021

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# **Alok Sharma welcomes Bangladesh climate leadership and ambition ahead of COP26**

- COP26 President-Designate Alok Sharma visited Bangladesh, following successful visits to Viet Nam and Indonesia
- He met Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina as well as government ministers, climate experts and youth to discuss shared aims
- A joint statement on UK-Bangladesh climate action was signed, laying the foundations for long-term climate partnership

The COP26 President-Designate Alok Sharma has welcomed strong climate commitments from Bangladesh during a visit to the country from 2 – 3 June.

Alok Sharma held constructive discussions with government leaders, including Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen and other senior government representatives.

He heard about the prospect of Bangladesh transitioning away from coal to clean and renewable energy, which will create economic growth and sustainable jobs, and a commitment from Bangladesh to submit an ambitious updated nationally determined contribution (NDC) in the coming weeks, with a net zero target in the near future.

He met Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, as well as government

ministers and young people to discuss shared aims.

A [joint statement](#) on UK-Bangladesh climate action was signed, laying the foundations for long-term climate partnership.

During his visit, Mr Sharma travelled to the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest, which plays a significant role as a carbon sink. He saw how the natural defences of the Sundarbans can protect villages from high wind speeds and storm surges – natural defences which are sadly being shrunk by the effects of industrialisation and our changing climate.

He also visited a local NGO which is helping communities to manage the natural resources in a sustainable way.

Speaking at the end of his visit, COP26 President Alok Sharma said:

“The next decade will be make, or break, for our planet, and effective global collaboration will be vital to tackling the pressing challenges the world faces. So I am delighted to have witnessed UK-Bangladeshi climate partnership in action, and heard such positive ambition from my Bangladeshi friends.

“I am inspired by the innovative work I have seen here to address some of the worst effects of climate change, and hope that Bangladesh will continue to lead by example ahead of COP26 which is our best hope of building a brighter future.”

Mr Sharma encouraged greater ambition on reducing Bangladesh's coal pipeline and offered UK support for a clean energy transition with solutions such as offshore wind and integrating nature-based solutions into Bangladesh's National Adaptation Plan. Speaking with ministers and policy makers, Mr Sharma welcomed the draft Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan. They explored how the UK and Bangladesh can work together to improve climate finance and drive action on locally-led adaptation.

The COP26 President also spoke to leading climate experts and youth leaders and activists on climate priorities for Bangladesh and COP26 and approaches to inclusive decision-making.

Mr Sharma reinforced that helping communities and countries adapt to the worst effects of climate change by stepping up access to funding and expertise for resilience and adaptation is a priority for the UK COP26 Presidency, alongside action to address climate loss and damage. As one of the countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, Mr Sharma saw the impacts on Bangladeshi agriculture, health and livelihoods, as increased flooding in both rural and urban areas is displacing people from their homes. The country has become a global leader on adapting to a changing climate, and since 2016 has invested more than \$6 billion dollars into adaptation activities.

The COP26 President's visit follows successful visits to Viet Nam and Indonesia. In Vietnam, Mr Sharma welcomed the prospect of accelerating Viet Nam's transition away from coal to clean and renewable energy under the upcoming Power Development Plan 8 (PDP8). The UK and Viet Nam both welcomed

recent announcements on reaching net zero emissions across the region, and Viet Nam confirmed its intention to reach net zero emissions as early as possible based on further international support.

In Indonesia, Alok Sharma underlined the opportunities to boost green growth, focus on clean energy transition and deliver new jobs in place of coal. Work is ongoing across the Indonesian Government towards a net zero target.

**Ends.**

### **Note to the editors**

1. The UK will host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow in November 2021. The climate talks will be the biggest international summit the UK has ever hosted; bringing together over 30,000 delegates including heads of state, climate experts and campaigners to agree coordinated action to tackle climate change
2. In its role as chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, Bangladesh will be convening 48 of the world's most climate vulnerable countries to drive action ahead of COP26, providing an important platform for driving global action. Bangladesh and the UK share many common priorities on climate action and are working closely together to ensure action in the run up to COP26 and beyond. Priority themes at COP26 with great potential for collaboration include: adaptation and resilience; climate finance; clean energy transition; and nature-based solutions
3. The UK is already a key partner to Bangladesh on disaster management and resilience building. Since 2008, UK and Bangladesh jointly helped over 27 million people gain access to early warning systems for floods and cyclones, and provided emergency assistance and recovery support after disasters to more than 900,000 people
4. To address last year's devastating floods in Bangladesh, UK aid has provided £950,000 of rapid release funding to NGOs through the START Fund. This supported cash assistance, water, sanitation, hygiene, health, shelter, and search and rescue to over 83,000 people
5. The UK is the third largest bilateral donor overall in Bangladesh, providing more than £400 million in aid since 2018

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## **Memorial trees planted in Oxford to remember lives lost around the world**

- Health ministers and local nurse plant trees following end to UK-hosted G7 talks
- Lasting memorial in Oxford Botanic Garden for lives lost globally during the pandemic
- This year marks the 400th anniversary of the garden's foundation and its contribution to scientific discovery in Oxford



Health ministers from across the world have come together in a tree-planting ceremony to remember those who have tragically lost their lives to COVID-19, marking the conclusion of the [G7 Health Ministers' Meeting](#) in Oxford today (Friday 4 June).

The Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock, alongside other health leaders and a local chief nurse, planted 10 Japanese cherry (Sakura) blossom trees – one for each representative of the G7, as well as the World Health Organization and global healthcare staff – at the Oxford Botanic Garden this afternoon, complementing the garden's already extensive collection of plants.

In Japan, the trees themselves are said to act as a metaphor for the finite nature of life.

Following the crucial UK-hosted G7 Health Ministers' Meeting this week – which brought together health leaders from the world's major democracies to agree life-saving action in critical areas of global health, including preventing future pandemics – the memorial acts as a timely reminder for friends and family members of loved ones they have lost.

As one of the oldest botanic gardens in the world, the Oxford Botanic Garden began as a physic garden – where healing herbs and plants are grown – in which medical students from Oxford University were taught how to identify medicinal plants in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

As I work with my G7 colleagues to better prepare us all for future health threats, we must never forget the sorrow and heartbreak felt across the UK and around the world as a result of COVID-19.

Oxford has played a central role in showing us the road out of the pandemic and their Botanic Garden now has a fitting tribute for people to be able to reflect and remember those that have been lost.

This year, the Botanic Garden celebrates the 400th anniversary of its foundation and its contribution to scientific discovery in Oxford. The garden and its arboretum at Nuneham Courtenay have been an oasis for people to enjoy during what has been a challenging 18 months.

Sam Foster, Chief Nursing Officer at Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, administered the first Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine to a patient outside of clinical trials, on 4 January. She today planted a memorial tree on behalf of health and care staff around the world.

Sam Foster, Chief Nursing Officer at Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, said:

It is a great honour to be asked to plant a tree to remember all



the dedicated nurses, doctors and other healthcare professionals who have cared for people with COVID-19 – including those who have lost their lives during the pandemic.

We must never forget the contribution which every member of health and care staff has made during this time of unprecedented challenges for the NHS and globally.

The 2021 G7 Health Ministers' Meeting has been held in person at Oxford University – a global centre of clinical, scientific and academic excellence – which has been at the heart of the global fight against COVID-19, with world-leading clinical trials and its not-for-profit partnership with AstraZeneca on COVID-19 vaccines already saving thousands of lives across the globe.

The meeting took place over 2 days and provided a valuable opportunity to discuss global health security, antimicrobial resistance, clinical trials and digital health, as well as live issues. Engagement also took place virtually with the G7 Presidency's guest countries: Republic of India, Republic of Korea, Australia and Republic of South Africa.

The Health Ministers' Meeting precedes and informs health discussions at the Leaders' Summit, hosted by the Prime Minister on 11 to 13 June.

Professor Louise Richardson, Vice Chancellor of the University of Oxford, said:

Oxford University is honoured to have hosted the Health Ministers and is very grateful for this gesture of commemoration for those who have lost their lives. Planting beautiful trees in our ancient Botanic Garden is a powerful affirmation of the health-giving properties of nature itself and will be a source of reflection for generations to come.

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## **United Kingdom's Prof Dapo Akande backed by five United Nations members for 2021 International Law Commission election**

Highlighting the calibre of Professor Akande's legal experience and expertise, this is the first time in ILC history that a candidate has been

nominated by countries from four different United Nations (UN) regional groups. This wide-ranging support demonstrates that Professor Akande is exceptionally well qualified to serve on this prestigious UN body.

With over 25 years of experience at top academic institutions and a prolific author, Professor Akande has strong links with the international legal community. He is an internationally renowned expert in Public International Law, and currently teaches at the University of Oxford. Professor Akande is also a founder of EJIL:TALK! and a board member for several legal journals and scholarly societies around the world.

As a lawyer, he has advised countries from around the globe and has appeared before many of the world's leading legal institutions, such as the International Court of Justice, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, the International Criminal Court and the European Court of Human Rights.

Professor Akande has a strong vision and if elected he has three main aims: to help the Commission solve contemporary problems of international law; to work closely with UN member states in identifying topics and developing solutions and; to ensure the highest standards of technical legal expertise.

The UK Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, stated:

The United Kingdom has always been a strong supporter of the International Law Commission and is proud of the contribution that British international lawyers have made to its work. I believe that Professor Akande is perfectly positioned to strengthen this contribution yet further.

The UK's candidate to join the Commission, Professor Akande, said:

It is a true honour to be nominated by the UK, Nigeria, Japan, Kenya and Slovenia for the International Law Commission. Throughout my career, I have championed and promoted internationalism. If elected, I will strive to make a meaningful contribution to international law and international cooperation.

On 10 June Professor Akande will take part in the event 'Crimes Against Humanity: the legal framework and the work of the International Law Commission' with Professor Charles Jalloh, Sierra Leone candidate for the ILC, and Professor Phoebe Okowa, nominated for the ILC by Kenya and UK.

Professor Dapo Akande is the United Kingdom candidate for the International Law Commission for the term 2023 to 2027, and has also been nominated by Japan, Kenya, Nigeria and Slovenia. Each member of the International Law Commission may nominate up to four candidates, and the UK has also nominated Japan's Professor Masahiko Asada and Kenya's Professor Phoebe Okowa. The election will take place in November 2021. For further details about Professor Akande, his campaign brochure is available in [English](#), [French](#),

[Spanish](#), [Portuguese](#), [Arabic](#), [Chinese](#) and [Russian](#).