

Tackling gender inequality is crucial for climate adaptation

Coronavirus – and its many lockdowns – has led to women around the world doing more domestic chores and family care; employment and education opportunities for women are being lost.

Similarly, the impacts of climate change – such as floods, heatwaves or wildfires – disproportionately hit women's livelihoods.

But, as Dr Tamsin Edwards, a climate scientist at King's College London and co-presenter of the BBC's 39 ways to save the planet, has said:

The story to tell here is not just the suffering of women. We have an unprecedented chance to design a better future. We know that policies that reduce climate change or its impacts can reduce gender inequality, and vice versa, as long as they are truly designed in consultation with women.

In over 25 years working in financial services in the UK, I've seen individuals and business respond to changes in society at different speeds.

Gender diversity leads to better outcomes.

For instance, oil companies with higher female representation at board level are more likely to have set decarbonisation strategies.

This doesn't mean having more women leads to lower emissions, but it does point to a positive correlation between gender diversity and improving climate governance.

Over a decade ago I helped set up the 30% Club and its investor group to increase the number of women in the boardroom.

While we celebrate success in this, with a dramatic jump in the UK in the last five years, women's progress to top executive roles is still fragile and slow.

Melinda Gates and David Malpass recently wrote:

When the 2008 recession hit, few asked how stimulus measures would affect women compared with men. That approach won't work for the COVID-19 crisis. As leaders face the enormous challenge of rebuilding post-pandemic economies, women must be at the centre of their strategies.

At the Environment Agency I am keen that we walk the walk ourselves.

Through our flood work and regulation we help make the country more resilient to climate shocks.

In January, I was in Greater Manchester as part of the response to Storm Christoph where our defences stopped tens of thousands of people from being flooded out of their homes.

Ten of our fifteen area directors across the country are women and so are two of our five executive directors. They lead this response on the ground.

Our Board has five men and seven women.

Among other things, we review our pay gap for disability, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation (protected characteristics) as well as gender.

I'm not pretending we've got diversity sorted, we're a long way from it, but more inclusive decision making that is representative of communities we work in, leads to better outcomes for the environment and communities.

People with relevant experiences need to be included in decision-making, this makes for better policy.

So we must amplify the voices of women who work on the climate change and nature recovery agendas, not just on International Women's Day but every day.

WaterAid, a charity many colleagues at the Environment Agency support, say access to water, sanitation and hygiene is already gendered and being made worse by climate change.

It is women and girls who are most effected by water scarcity as a result of climate change; but it is women and girls who lead on the solutions, and when climate disaster hits it is women that lead the response, so this year, when the UK hosts COP26 in Glasgow and the Convention on Biological Diversity COP15 takes place in Kunming, China, governments should be discussing greater investment in locally led adaptation.

The climate crisis will bring a multitude of overlapping impacts.

Men and women will need to use all of our expertise and strength to be prosperous and resilient.

Female leadership in international, national and local climate policy-making is vital.

Thank you.

Work underway to restore eye-catching structure's former glory

Highways England Historical Railways Estate (HRE) is repairing Twizel Viaduct, near Cornhill-on-Tweed in Northumberland, to extend the life of the viaduct and allow people to continue enjoying the popular attraction.

The six-arch structure, which was built in the middle of the 19th century, carries a permissive footpath, and a public footpath passes underneath.

Recent detailed examinations have highlighted areas of spalled brickwork in the arches, fractures in the spandrel walls above the piers and areas of mortar loss throughout which are being repaired. Contractors are using ropes and cradles due to the height and location of the viaduct.

A new waterproofing system was installed on the deck by Northumberland County Council, ahead of opening the permissive path across the viaduct in 2005.

Highways England civil engineer Colin McNicol said:

The repairs to this stunning former railway viaduct will enable the public to enjoy using it to cross the River Till for many years to come.

HRE maintains more than 3,000 structures for the Department for Transport and is working closely with Northumberland County Council on this scheme.

Northumberland County Council leader Glen Sanderson said:

This is an iconic structure in the area which we've carried out work on over the years. We're pleased Highways England is carrying out this work to extend the life of this beautiful bridge for future generations to enjoy.

Engineers using ropes and cradles to safely carry out the repair work

The viaduct was constructed by the Newcastle & Berwick Railway between 1846 and 1849, to carry the Tweedmouth to Kelso branch line over the River Till at Twizel.

The first train crossed the viaduct on 27 July 1849, while the final passenger service on the line was in the summer of 1964, followed by the last goods train nine months later.

The track was removed when the railway closed, and some of the line makes a

footpath.

The work at Twizel Viaduct is the latest example of partnership working between Highways England and local authorities to create positive outcomes for the public and prolong the life of cherished structures

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Businesses sign up to play a part in Highways England's A30 upgrade in Cornwall](#)

Since extending an invite in January for small and medium-sized businesses to get involved in the nine-mile dualling scheme, a total of 65 companies have already registered their interest, with 60% of those from within the county of Cornwall.

Of the companies registered so far with contractors Costain, a large percentage are involved in civil engineering, building and civil works, security, facilities management and landscaping, together with other professional services such as business supply, hospitality catering, cleaning, environmental and waste management.

Josh Hodder, Senior Project Manager for the Highways England scheme, is delighted with the response so far and is encouraging even more businesses to get involved. He said:

The scheme has numerous benefits, not only in improving journey reliability, safety and local connectivity, but also in unlocking economic growth in Cornwall and the wider South West region.

Employing local people will also bring economic benefits during the construction phase of the project, and we will also be engaging with local schools and colleges to inspire, offer support and advice and to promote careers within the industry.

The scheme is not just limited to larger, national and international companies, we're encouraged by the response so far, and we're keen for more local and regional businesses to get the chance to work with the project. 2021 is going to be a big year for the A30 project and we urge businesses to get in touch now, so we can start to help them prepare.

Construction work on the A30 dualling scheme between the Chiverton and Carland Cross roundabouts (visualisation here) will start in earnest this summer

The company, responsible for England's major A roads and motorways, is working closely with Costain, who are currently forming their own supply chain, providing opportunities for sub-contractors and sub-consultants to bid for work and become part of the extended supply chain.

And working with the Department for Work and Pensions and The Prince's Trust, Costain is also looking to employ 10 people through the local Kick Start programme and is aiming to recruit 45 apprentices to work in various capacities as part of the project team.

John Lee, Senior Project Manager for Costain, said:

One of the key benefits of the new A30 will be to unlock economic growth in the area. We want our project to start this growth immediately, by employing local people and developing them in sustainable jobs our local communities can benefit straight away.

Over the duration of the project, we will be engaging with young people, getting them thinking about a career in construction and if they're interested giving them opportunities to learn and achieve their ambitions.

The move has been warmly welcomed by Cherilyn Mackrory, MP for Truro and Falmouth, who said:

I am delighted to see Highways England's work on the A30 upgrade continue, with interest from companies across Cornwall in contributing towards this vital piece of infrastructure.

It is also good to see Costain working with the local Jobcentre and Prince's Trust by participating in the DWP's new Kickstart Scheme and providing invaluable practical on-the-job training via apprenticeships for local people.

This project will unlock economic growth and improve connectivity across Cornwall and I look forward to visiting again soon to see

the progress.

Highways England has also partnered nationally with the [Supply Chain Sustainability School](#) to provide free online training. This helps smaller companies to upskill and places them in a better position to tender for work on larger infrastructure projects, such as the A30 Chiverton to Carland Cross scheme.

More details around job opportunities are available at <https://www.costain.com/careers/> and any companies interested in working on the A30 project are asked to register their details via email at a30supplierenq@costain.com.

Further information and updates will be available on the [A30 Chiverton to Carland Cross web page](#). Local residents and businesses can sign up for email notifications and there is a dedicated community relations team available to answer any questions. The team can be contacted by email via the web page.

If you'd prefer to speak to someone, then you can phone the project helpline on 0845 600 2664 or Highways England on 0300 123 5000 and one of the team based on the A30 Chiverton to Carland Cross scheme will call you back as soon as possible.

The £330 million upgrade includes:

- a 70mph high-quality dual carriageway
- a two-level junction at Chiverton Cross and a new roundabout to ensure the free flow of traffic on the A30
- a new partial junction at Chybucca built on two levels with west-facing slip roads to provide access onto the dual carriageway from local routes
- new bridges at Tolgroggan Farm, Pennycomequick Lane and over the Allet to Tresawsen road to provide local access
- a two-level junction at Carland Cross with a new roundabout north of the dual carriageway and re-using the existing roundabout to the south
- keeping the existing A30 as a local route with new sections where necessary to provide continuity and connectivity for local communities

The scheme is progressing, and once ground investigation and clearance work is completed, construction work on the new link roads at the Chiverton Cross junction will start in the spring, with earthworks and construction of the new route scheduled to start in late spring, early summer.

The cost of developing the scheme is being partly funded by an £8 million contribution from the European Regional Development Fund, with an additional £12 million for the construction phase. The remainder of the cost of developing and delivering the scheme is being funded by central Government.

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[Security and Policing 2021](#)

News story

Countries, territories and organisations invited by UK Defence and Security Exports on behalf of the Home Office to attend Security and Policing 2021.



Countries, territories and organisations invited by invited by Department for International Trade, UK Defence and Security Exports on behalf of the Home Office to attend the virtual Security and Policing 2021 event.

Countries annotated with '*' attended the virtual exhibition:

- Algeria *
- Argentina
- Australia *
- Austria *
- Bahrain
- Bangladesh
- Belgium *
- Brazil
- Bulgaria *
- Canada *
- Croatia *
- Czech Republic *
- Denmark *
- Egypt *
- Finland *
- France
- Germany

- Ghana *
- Greece *
- Hungary *
- India *
- Indonesia
- Iraq
- Italy *
- Japan *
- Kenya *
- Latvia *
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg *
- Malaysia *
- Mexico
- Morocco *
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
- Netherlands *
- New Zealand *
- Nigeria *
- Norway *
- Oman *
- Pakistan *
- Peru *
- Poland *
- Portugal *
- Qatar
- Romania *
- Saudi Arabia *
- Singapore *
- South Africa *
- South Korea *
- Sweden *
- Switzerland *
- Taiwan *
- Thailand
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Turkey
- Ukraine *
- United Nations (UN) *
- USA *
- Vietnam *

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FS speech: 10th UK-Caribbean Forum, 18 March 2021

Introduction – UK-Caribbean links

Excellencies, Ministers, Ladies and gentlemen, It's a pleasure to join you today, and to convene this important meeting.

The links between the UK and the Caribbean could hardly be stronger. With over one million people of Caribbean origin in the UK and over 200,000 British nationals in the Caribbean, we are more than friends, we are family.

From Mary Seacole to John Barnes, From Baroness Benjamin to countless NHS staff, People of Caribbean origin make an invaluable contribution to every aspect of British life.

They have built their lives and made their homes in the UK, Making the UK stronger, More vibrant, And more successful as a nation.

This is why we are acting urgently to put right the mistakes that led to the Windrush scandal.

Of course there are also many examples of British Caribbean people who have done great work in the Caribbean itself. I'm thinking of people like Arthur Wint who served in the RAF, Won the first medal for Jamaica at the Olympics, Trained at St Thomas's Hospital in London, And took his medical qualifications back to Jamaica. He went on to be posted back to London as the Jamaican High Commissioner.

Or business people like Ashley Parasram, Who established the Trinidad and Tobago Fine Cocoa Company... And is working to boost global trade in Caribbean chocolate.

There are many, many inspiring stories which show the strength of this relationship.

We want to keep building the links between our countries.

The fact that we have opened four new diplomatic posts in the Caribbean in the last 18 months... In Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Grenada, and St Vincent and the Grenadines... Underlines our commitment to the region.

There are many areas where we want to do more together. So I'd like to highlight three today.

COVID-19

First, beating Covid-19 – surely the most pressing, crucial area that we face.

The UK is proud to be one of the biggest supporters of the COVAX initiative, committing £548 million globally to help deliver vaccines in developing countries.

This support will help supply over a million doses of safe and effective vaccines to six Caribbean countries by the end of this summer – enough for over 500,000 frontline workers and vulnerable people. In total, COVAX will provide 2.1 million doses to the region in the first half of 2021.

Of course we are also rolling out vaccines to British nationals in the Overseas Territories. We are determined to keep playing our full role in the global fight against the virus.

Economic recovery

The second area I want to touch on is the toll that Covid-19 has taken on the economy, and our efforts to build back better.

Hundreds of thousands of people from the UK have experienced first hand the Caribbean hospitality and tourism industry. But Covid has hit the sector hard.

The IMF estimated that tourism-dependent Caribbean economies would shrink by almost 10% last year.

The UK economy has also been hard hit and we have had to make some tough decisions, including to temporarily reduce our aid spending.

But let me assure you that we will continue to play a key role in the region, including through our recent £21 million contribution to the Caribbean Development Bank's Special Development Fund.

We also continue to support the region's development through work on... Climate and disaster resilience, Economic recovery, governance and security, As well as through our flagship UK Caribbean Infrastructure Fund. This Fund is supporting 14 major infrastructure projects, including climate resilient investments in roads, ports, water supply and agriculture.

We want to work together to put our economies on the path to recovery.

Now that we have left the EU, the Economic Partnership Agreement between the UK and the countries of CARIFORUM has come into effect.

This will allow us to trade openly and equally – to the benefit of all.

The Agreement covers trade in goods and services worth £3.1 billion, providing duty free, quota free access for CARIFORUM goods, And opportunities to capitalise on our shared competitive advantage in the services economy.

Our Trade Envoys Darren Henry MP and Baroness Hooper are working to help companies take advantage of the new Agreement. And they'll be speaking on all of this later in the forum.

The international community has rightly recognised that Small Island Developing States are a special case for sustainable development, and we continue to put that into action.

We continue to advocate internationally on issues that are of greatest concern to SIDS, including on access to finance and development assistance.

And we have launched our new SIDS Hub to help tackle the unique challenges facing small island states, including providing technical and capacity-building support to help deal with climate change and its impacts in the region.

Climate Change

Climate change is the third area I want to talk about today – and this builds directly on my previous point. We have to pursue a green economic recovery if we are to stop catastrophic climate change.

We recognise the urgent threat that climate change poses for the Caribbean.

2020 was marked by the most active hurricane season ever recorded, with 30 named storms doing untold damage across the region.

As you know only too well, the economic costs of climate change are sobering.

To take just one example, Dominica lost over 200% of its GDP as a result of a single hurricane in 2017. So we have to act, and we have to act decisively.

As President and host of this year's UN Climate Change Conference, we are leading efforts to achieve a step change in ambition.

We will ensure that Caribbean countries have a strong platform at that meeting, and in the lead up to it, and we will ensure that there is a major focus on the issues you care most about including adaptation, resilience and scaling-up climate finance.

We all have a role to play – but of course the biggest responsibility lies with the big emitters. We need them to act with urgency and at scale to reduce emissions – as the UK is already doing. We will champion this relentlessly as COP26 President this year.

Next Steps & Commonwealth

There is so much we can do together – in these areas and many others besides.

We will take all of this forward in the quarterly meetings between Caribbean Heads of Mission in London and our Minister for the Caribbean, at the Joint Ministerial Council with the Overseas Territories, and – for many of us – at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting to be held in Rwanda this summer.

CHOGM will be a key staging post on the road to COP26, and in our shared efforts to build back better after the pandemic.

Of course not everyone at this meeting is in the Commonwealth, but I believe it has an important role in the region – so let me just say a word on this.

With strong commitment and leadership, the Commonwealth can make a big difference in delivering on all of the areas I've mentioned today – especially on climate.

I was proud to lead on a Commonwealth statement reaffirming our rejection of racism and discrimination, which was unanimously adopted by all 54 member states at the Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministerial that I chaired in October.

And it was important to see Commonwealth leaders coming together with a strong statement on tackling Covid-19 last summer.

But we should raise our ambitions. I want to see the Commonwealth delivering much more as in the Caribbean and beyond.

The UK, for one, is committed to being a force for good in the region.

Conclusion

So I look forward to our discussions today – and to hearing the feedback on the progress made at this Forum.

There's no doubt that the last year has been really tough for us all. And it is going to be tough for some time to come. But we are optimistic.

We are fighting back against the virus with vaccines. We are putting in place the building blocks of a better, greener recovery. And we are strengthening our cooperation so that we can meet the challenges and grasp the opportunities together.

Thank you.