

World news story: UK Environment Ministers visits Uganda ahead of CHOGM

UK Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey this week visited Uganda to discuss the upcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and see local work to reduce plastic use and fight the international illegal wildlife trade.

The Minister's visit on Thursday 5 and Friday 6 April comes a fortnight before the start of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) to be held in London on 19-20 April 2018.

During the Minister's visit to Uganda she met Dr Mary Kitutu, the Ugandan State Minister for the Environment. The Ministers discussed the upcoming CHOGM as an opportunity for countries to work together to tackle environmental issues such as marine plastics under the CHOGM ambition of 'Delivering a Sustainable Future'.

At the Uganda Breweries Limited brewery in Luzira, owned by Diageo a leading British beverage firm, the Minister saw the brewery's work to reduce their impact on the environment through reducing waste and improving recycling.

The Minister also met Ugandan Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hon. Sam Kutesa and visited the Nile Basin Initiative secretariat in Entebbe.

The Minister spent time at Murchison Falls National Park to understand more about how the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) are working to protect Uganda's diverse wildlife and ecosystems. The Minister met UWA rangers who have benefited from anti-poacher training provided by the UK Military. The Minister visited the park in the same week that the UK Environment Secretary, Michael Gove, announced that the UK would introduce a ban on ivory sales. The Minister highlighted the UK's ambition to deliver a step change in the global fight against the illegal wildlife trade as a transnational crime and threat to endangered species. The UK will host an Illegal Wildlife Trade conference on the 10-11 October 2018.

UK Minister for the Environment, Thérèse Coffey said:

The total ban on ivory sales puts the UK at the forefront of global efforts to address the drastic decline in the elephant population, demonstrating our belief that the abhorrent ivory trade should become a thing of the past.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue and many others with the Ugandan Government and I hope through this continued dialogue we can further continue the successful partnership of our two countries.