

OECD BLUE-UNDP BIOFIN Virtual Global Conference on Biodiversity Finance

Session 6: A New Biodiversity Finance Agenda for 2021-30

Statement by the UK

From Dr Cheryl Case, International Biodiversity and Environment, Defra

- I would like to thank the OECD and UNDP for hosting this conference in difficult times. This will be an important stepping stone in the development of the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. Although our desired timetable for 2020 has been disrupted, that does not mean our ambition has been diminished. Meetings such as this are important for maintaining momentum.
- The OECD is contributing valuable work in the area of biodiversity finance, including their reports to the G7 Environment Ministers and their follow up analysis of global biodiversity finance flows. These will be valuable inputs to the discussions around Resource Mobilisation under the CBD. Such expertise and information will also be necessary as we work together to build a resilient and sustainable recovery to the covid crisis.
- We know from the OECD's analysis that globally we invest around \$80 to \$90 billion per year in biodiversity finance. Far less than is needed. The UK's ambition for CBD COP-15 is to secure an ambitious post-2020 framework that reflects the urgent need to respect nature and all that it provides us. Securing finance on this scale will require multiple sources and actors. Some resources will be new, some will be a refocussing of existing resources to achieve more than one outcome, and some will come from rediverting environmentally harmful subsidies. A radical rethink is needed of the approaches we have taken traditionally and to address the balance.
- Climate change and biodiversity loss are intrinsically linked and need to be tackled together. As COP-26 hosts, along with our partner Italy, the UK has committed to ensure a joint approach to these crises. Nature Based Solutions could deliver up to a third of the cost-effective mitigation required by 2030 to meet the Paris Agreement's goal. They offer strong benefits for climate change adaptation and human livelihoods. However only 3% of global climate finance is currently spent on nature-based solutions. In the run-up to the COPs next year, we will be working with other government partners, International financial Institutions, and the private sector, to bring public and private financing together in support of such solutions.

- The UK has a strong story to tell here. At the UN Climate Action Summit last year, the UK committed to double its international climate finance to at least £11.6bn over 5 years. Among other things, this uplift in funding will support the protection of vital ecosystems such as forests and mangroves. Going forward, the UK is committed to investing a greater amount of climate financing into areas that benefits both climate change and biodiversity.
- Last year our Prime Minister announced a £220 million package of investment aimed at halting the unprecedented loss of habitats and species and saving those most at risk. This boost in funding will help strengthen existing work and allow more projects to be supported through our Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund and the world renown Darwin Initiative to protect nature for generations to come. In addition this will expand our ability to protect and restore key landscapes and ecosystems as well as provide support to communities in five global biodiversity hotspots through the new Biodiverse Landscapes Fund.
- Often overlooked within biodiversity funding is marine biodiversity. The OECD's latest report notes that only 4% of bilateral, and 9% of multilateral biodiversity ODA spend is targeted towards the ocean. This is why, alongside terrestrial programmes, we will be establishing a £500m Blue Planet Fund, helping eligible countries protect their marine resources from key human-generated stressors including plastic pollution, overfishing and habitat loss.
- Private finance has a major role to play in reversing biodiversity loss and aligning financial flows with environmental ambitions. Last year the UK published its first Green Finance Strategy, which explores measures to integrate both climate and environmental factors into financial decision-making – essential if we are to shift incentives. We also support blended finance vehicles, such as the Eco Business Fund and the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund, which utilise public capital to leverage additional private finance for green investment.
- In delivering an ambitious global biodiversity framework, national as well as international flows will be important. In England, we recently announced support for wildlife-rich habitats through a £640m Nature for Climate fund and £25m Nature Recovery fund, which will preserve our unique environment and capture carbon to fight climate change. This will help deliver on our commitment to create or restore 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat outside protected sites by 2042 as part of a Nature Recovery Network, which will aid the recovery of wildlife, help wildlife adapt to climate change, and provide wider environmental benefits, such as carbon capture, water quality and recreation.
- In March 2019, HM Treasury, the UK government's economic and finance ministry, commissioned an independent, global review on the economics of

biodiversity. The Review is led by Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta, supported by an Advisory Panel of expert economists, scientists and private sector representatives from around the world. The Review will set out a unified framework for thinking about the economics in a way that fully accounts for the benefits we all derive from our natural environment, and the serious economic risks that emerge from the degradation of the biosphere. The final Review will be published later in the year. We will build on the recommendations of the review to identify new ways to ensure we are able to enhance both biodiversity and prosperity.

- Looking ahead to our hopes and ambitions for 2021 – 2030. The UK continues to have a high level of ambition for tackling the twin challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change. The current crisis has only served to increase the importance of the transitional changes needed. It is more important than ever that we make the most of the opportunities that COP 15 and COP 26 provide to us.