

Individuals to be protected from 'devastating impact' of problem debt

A new Breathing Space scheme will protect individuals with problem debt, with those in mental health crisis to get further protections while they receive treatment.

Press release: Thousands of farmers in stewardship agreements to be paid in July

Payments will be made in full to eligible farmers in agri-environment schemes who are still waiting to be paid, the government has confirmed today (19 June).

Press release: UK and Colombia mark new climate partnership with £8.5 million investment

The 2 countries strike new partnership to fight climate change and protect Colombia's environment – one of the most biodiverse on Earth.

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- £130 million of UK investment already helping to achieve this, including

tackling deforestation in the Amazon

- both countries reaffirm commitment to Paris Climate Agreement just days after UK became one of the world's first major economies to legislate for net zero emissions by 2050

The UK today marked a new climate partnership with Colombia and committed £8.5 million to protect the country's unique ecosystem and fight climate change.

The agreement was signed by Colombian Environment Minister Ricardo Lozano and the UK Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, as the President of Colombia Iván Duque visited the UK. The agreement committed both nations to accelerating the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

The partnership with the South American country comes less than a week after the UK government took the most significant action on climate change of any G7 country in history. The Prime Minister legislated to bring greenhouse gas emissions down to net zero by 2050.

As part of the £8.5 million investment, £3.5 million will help protect Colombia's ecosystem – the second most biodiverse in the world, with over 30,000 plant and lichen species. Royal Botanic Gardens Kew will build a public database of useful plants, helping entrepreneurs make money sustainably from their domestic plant species.

An additional £5 million will help towards turning Colombia's finance industry green – sharing the City of London's expertise – and introducing low emission vehicles into Colombia's major cities.

UK Energy and Clean Growth Minister Chris Skidmore said:

The UK is leading the world in the fight against rising temperatures, reducing our emissions by over 40% since 1990 and legislating for net zero emissions by 2050 – one of the first major economies to do so.

But we can't tackle this threat to our very existence on our own. It is only through international cooperation that we can protect our precious planet. That's why we've signed this important new agreement with the government of Colombia to work together to protect their unique environment and help them reach even more ambitious climate targets – setting an example to other countries in South America.

Colombia has committed to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2030, and by 30% by 2030 if it receives international financial support.

Deforestation and change in land use account for a significant amount of Colombia's emissions and the country is facing a new set of challenges to protect the Amazon.

The UK has worked with Colombia in tackling deforestation, investing around £70 million in projects which include helping farmers switch to more sustainable farming methods and helping more than 11,000 families to better care for Colombia's forests.

UK Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, said:

The UK and Colombia are both committed to the global effort to stop climate change. The Amazon rainforest provides the lungs of the planet and the Colombian government is facing a continued challenge in protecting it from destruction.

The UK pledges lasting support to President Duque in his efforts to safeguard such vital environmental assets. This represents the thriving relationship we have with Colombia, spanning across a multitude of areas from sustainable growth to education and their vital role in the Venezuela crisis.

President of Colombia, Iván Duque, said:

For the first time Colombia and the United Kingdom are signing up to a joint agenda for tackling climate change, the fight against deforestation, the sustainability of sectors such as energy and transport, and the strengthening of measurement systems for climate change. Both countries share the global commitment to mitigate the impact of climate change and are strategic allies in this area.

The Colombia-UK Partnership for Sustainable Growth commits both countries to work more closely together to advance low carbon investments and improve resilience against the worst effects of climate change. Both countries have also reaffirmed their commitment to the Paris Climate Agreement of keeping global temperature rises below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels, and pursuing efforts for 1.5 °C.

The UK recently published the [International Research and Innovation Strategy](#), which sets out how we will collaborate internationally to tackle global challenges and support economic growth.

Notes to editors

1. Colombia Background: Colombia played a crucial role in setting up the Cartagena Dialogue, (a grouping of progressive countries founded by UK, Colombia and Australia) and are active in the High Ambition Coalition. Colombia is a member of the Pacific Alliance (a trading group with Peru, Chile and Mexico).

2. Partnership Background: The Memorandum of Understanding puts in place annual high-level meetings in order to advance efforts on decarbonising, halting deforestation, preserving biodiversity and promoting green finance.

It also commits the UK and Colombia to work together on climate change, sharing UK expertise internationally.

3. UK investment in Colombia: UK Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions (PACT) has today announced £5 million to Colombian projects, including green finance and asset disclosure, sustainable infrastructure and mobility, and renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. A separate £3.5 million Newton Fund investment will include:

- £2.5 million for the British Council / Royal Botanic Gardens Kew to expand knowledge on native Colombian plants and fungi and developing a market for underutilised indigenous species
- £200k for a soil genome skills facility led by the University of Sheffield
- £355k for the Royal Academy of Engineering Leaders in Innovation Fellowships to build entrepreneurial capacity of Colombian innovators and researchers

4. International Climate Finance Background: Alongside other developed countries, the UK has committed to jointly mobilise \$100 billion per year in climate finance to developing countries from public and private sources. As part of this commitment, we pledged to provide at least £5.8 billion of International Climate Finance (ICF) between 2016 and 2020, placing us amongst the world's leading providers of climate finance. This includes a joint commitment of \$5 billion with Germany and Norway for countries who bring forward ambitious projects to halt deforestation. The UK's ICF helps developing countries mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change, reduce deforestation and pursue clean economic growth. The ICF is focused on transformational change, reflecting the scale of the challenge of climate change.

[UK and Colombia mark new climate partnership with £8.5 million investment](#)

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