

COP26 brings countries together to protect world's forests

- New initiative brings key countries together to work towards sustainable food supply chains
- Ministers from more than 18 countries come together to develop a route map for future international trade that will protect forests
- Over 10 million hectares of forest are destroyed through global commodity production each year

A new initiative to protect rainforests from further destruction whilst ensuring development and trade is sustainable has been kick-started by the UK today as hosts of the COP26 climate summit in November.

The UK today launched the Forest, Agriculture and Commodity Trade (FACT) Dialogue, which will bring together key countries exporting agricultural products and the countries consuming these products to discuss how to make this process greener and more sustainable.

COP26 President-Designate, Alok Sharma, was joined by ministers from more than 18 different countries, including Brazil and South Korea, to kick start this new initiative which will take collaborative action through 2021 to November's climate conference and beyond.

International trade in commodities like palm oil, soy and beef, provides over \$80bn per annum in export earnings for producer countries, and contributes to food security and economic growth in consumer countries. The sector supports 1.5 billion people who depend on it for jobs and livelihoods, many of them in developing countries. Forests continue to disappear at an alarming rate as a result of agricultural production and in some cases deforestation is increasing.

The FACT Dialogue aims to agree principles for collaborative action, a shared roadmap for the transition to sustainable supply chains and international trade, and to take action now to protect forests while promoting development and trade.

This comes as Professor Dasgupta publishes his review today, which calls for urgent and transformative change in how we think, act and measure economic success to protect and enhance our prosperity and the natural world.

COP26 President-Designate, Alok Sharma, said:

I am proud to bring together the countries that can make global trade more sustainable for everyone.

This is about working together to protect our precious forests while enhancing livelihoods and supporting economic development and food security, which is one of our key priorities as we work

towards COP26 in Glasgow later this year.

Also joining today's launch was the Dialogue's non-governmental partner, the Tropical Rainforest Alliance (TFA) who announced the creation of a Global Multi Stakeholder Taskforce on commodity trade. The taskforce will bring together over 25 leading figures working on sustainability who will channel their expertise and advise the governmental dialogues throughout the year.

Fabiola Muñoz, Coordinator of the Peruvian Coalition for Sustainable Production and Co-chair of the Global Multi-stakeholder Taskforce said:

We have a unique opportunity to do things differently, to listen to all perspectives and regions, and collectively build the solutions that will lead us to a forest-positive future.

Action to protect the planet's diversity and establish a sustainable future will require global collaboration across all society, from policy makers and industrialists, through to the individual consumers.

Protection of the environment is woven through the UN 2030 Sustainable Developments Goals which were agreed five years ago and Goal 15, Life on Land, speaks specifically to the sustainable use of ecosystems. The launch of the FACT Dialogue today and the establishment of the Global Multi Stakeholder Task Force represents a major step forward in international collaboration on this pressing issue.

International Environment Minister Lord Goldsmith said:

Forests around the world are being destroyed at a truly alarming and completely unsustainable rate, with severe impacts on nature, people and climate. The UK has a long and proud history of supporting action to combat deforestation and promote sustainable land use. Our new due diligence measure in the Environment Bill will clean up our supply chains by making it illegal for UK businesses to use key commodities produced on illegally deforested land.

As part of our Presidency of COP26, we are building a global alliance of countries committed to working together to tackle this important issue and this new dialogue will be instrumental in making this happen.

The event launch will be moderated by TV presenter, Julia Bradbury, and the musician, Nile Rogers, will also take part.

Ends.

Notes to editors

- The UK will host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow on 1 – 12 November 2021.
 - The COP26 summit will bring parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.
 - The UK is committed to working with all countries and joining forces with civil society, companies and people on the frontline of climate change to inspire climate action ahead of COP26.
 - Further information on today's Dasgupta Review launch is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).
 - The FACT launch event will be live streamed on the COP26 YouTube channel from 1100 on 2 February and will be available after the event. [Access the event here](#).
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MCA targets uncoded race yachts

The MCA has agreed to discontinue prosecution against the owners of Scarlet Oyster and Playing Around, under the condition both enter into a written agreement to ensure their vessels are coded when engaged in any commercial activity.

The outcome reaffirms the agency's committed position to ensuring all vessels hold the correct documentation.

Small, commercially operated yachts must hold a valid code certificate when being used for any commercial purposes, including racing and training, while vessels must also only operate within the category of water for which they have been authorized. A failure to comply will result in enforcement action with the MCA committed to maintaining the rigorous standards of the UK Flag.

Despite initiatives to address concerns raised in 2019, such as publication of the information leaflet 'Are you in code mode' and officers attending Gran Canaria for the start of the ARC, investigations were begun into several yachts.

The Regulatory Compliance Investigation Team found a number of breaches, resulting in the owners receiving official cautions, paying several thousands of pounds in intervention costs to the MCA and ensuring their vessels were coded for future commercial use. Other yachts were sold or removed from the UK flag and no longer entitled to be UK registered.

Mark Flavell, Lead Investigator at the MCA as part of the Regulatory Compliance Investigations Team, said: "A misinterpretation of the code concerning yachts engaged in racing had developed. The MCA want to send a clear message and dispel this misinterpretation."

“Commercially operated vessels, including those engaged in racing, must be coded. This is to ensure commercial vessels are subject of an independent survey and inspection regime. The aim being, as with any scrutiny of commercial operations, is to keep employees and public safe.

“We will not hesitate to take enforcement action against yacht owners who don’t want to hear this message and fail to get their yacht coded.”

CMA requires viagogo to sell StubHub’s international business

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has concluded that the merger between viagogo and Stubhub will lead to a substantial reduction in competition in the secondary ticketing market in the UK. This could lead to customers who use secondary ticketing platforms facing higher fees or poorer service in future. To address this concern, the CMA is requiring viagogo to sell StubHub’s business outside North America.

This will mean that the StubHub international business – including in the UK – will be independently owned and run by a separate company, with no input from viagogo.

The CMA will determine key conditions of the sale, such as the right of the purchaser to use the StubHub brand for the next 10 years. The CMA will also need to approve the purchaser of the business before any sale.

Viagogo acquired StubHub in February 2020. StubHub’s ticketing business operates in a number of territories including North America, the UK and several countries in Europe, and South America and Asia. In the UK, viagogo and StubHub are the 2 main providers of secondary ticketing platforms.

To reach today’s decision, a group of independent CMA panel members considered evidence from customers, competitors and other stakeholders, including consumer groups.

The evidence shows that viagogo and StubHub compete closely against each other in the UK’s secondary ticketing market and have no significant competitors. Together, they have a combined market share of more than 90% and are the number 1 and number 2 players respectively in the UK.

The CMA also reviewed the evidence on whether other distribution channels – capped-price ticket exchanges, classified ad sites (like Gumtree), social media and the primary ticketing market itself – would be able to compete strongly with the merged entity. It found that these would not be able to stop the merged business from pushing up fees or reducing quality of service.

The CMA has been mindful of the significant impact that the coronavirus (COVID-19) is currently having on the live events industry through-out its investigation. However, the evidence is that viagogo and StubHub would remain important competitors as and when the live events industry recovers.

Stuart McIntosh, Chair of the CMA inquiry group, said:

The CMA has focused on ensuring competition in this sector works best for UK consumers. After examining all the options, including unwinding the merger in full, the evidence shows that viagogo selling StubHub's international business will resolve our competition concerns, effectively and proportionately.

Creating a fully independent StubHub international business will maintain competition in the UK and help ensure that the users of these ticketing platforms don't face higher prices or poorer quality of service.

For more information, visit the [viagogo/StubHub merger inquiry case page](#).

Notes to editors

1. Secondary Ticketing Platforms facilitate the resale of tickets to live sports, music and theatrical events, where resale of such tickets is permitted.

[Almost 20,000 jobs protected by Film & TV Production Restart Scheme](#)

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Natural England Chair welcomes Dasgupta Review

Natural England's Chair, Tony Juniper, today (2 February) welcomes the publication of the Dasgupta Review, hailing it a significant milestone in recognising the irreplaceable and vital roles played by healthy natural systems in supporting our economy and society.

Led up by Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta, the Review presents the first comprehensive economic framework of its kind for biodiversity. It calls for urgent and transformative change in how we think, act and measure economic success to protect and enhance the natural world as an essential prerequisite for sustaining our present and future prosperity.

The Review makes it clear that our economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the natural world and that degrading nature increasingly exposes the world to a host of risks. It points out how increased risk of pandemic is one threat that comes in the wake of the unsustainable relationship we have with our environment.

Welcoming the Review, Natural England Chair, Tony Juniper, said:

For too long it has been widely assumed that the degradation of the environment was a necessary price of progress. This Review reveals, however, that the opposite is in fact the case, and how a healthy natural world is essential for sustaining the health of our economy and society.

The clear upshot is that we now need to ensure collective and sustained action to ensure the natural world on which we depend is not only protected, but also restored at transformational scale. This will require a step change in investment, both public and private, in the recovery of Nature.

The restoration of the natural world will bring a range of valuable dividends, making this one of the wisest investments we can make, with rich returns seen in, for example, improved public health and wellbeing, catching carbon from the air, helping us adapt to the changing climate, ensuring supplies of clean water, boosting tourism and protecting our future food security.

The Review affirms the fact that biodiversity is declining faster than at any time in human history. Current extinction rates, for example, are around 100 to 1,000 times higher than the baseline rate, and they are increasing. Such declines are undermining Nature's productivity, resilience and adaptability,

and are in turn fuelling extreme risk and uncertainty for our economies and well-being.

Dasgupta's analysis highlights the need to engage society in nature for the sake of wellbeing and health, but also as a means to invest in future action. [Evidence from Natural England](#) supports this, showing that almost half the population say that they are spending more time outside than before the pandemic and the overwhelming majority consider nature is important to them, their health and their happiness.

Tony Juniper added:

Here in England we have a golden opportunity to make the shift we need to see, through the government's 25 Year Environment Plan and backed by the Environment Bill and other legislation and policies, especially in farming, all of which will help to deliver our landmark Nature Recovery Network.

The [Nature Recovery Network Delivery Partnership](#), led by Natural England, will bring together representatives from over 600 organisations to drive forward the restoration of our protected sites and landscapes and help provide at least 500,000 hectares of additional new wildlife-rich habitat across England. It is the biggest initiative to restore nature ever to be launched in England.

Today's publication comes ahead of COP15 for Biological Diversity, where new long-term international targets for addressing biodiversity loss are expected to be agreed; and COP26 for climate change, where nature and nature-based solutions to climate change are expected to play a prominent role.