

# NZ and UK must maintain Pacific climate focus says UK Minister

- Tackling climate change and biodiversity loss in the Pacific remains top priority says UK Minister,
- The UK will welcome NZ agritech companies next month to build new research, science and innovation links.
- Speech on last day of visit to Australia, Vanuatu and New Zealand – to boost ties with the UK's Pacific partners.

Tackling climate change and biodiversity loss in the Pacific should remain a top priority for the UK and New Zealand, says a visiting British Foreign Minister.

At the British High Commission in Wellington to an audience of diplomats, policy-makers and academics, Amanda Milling, the UK Minister for Asia and the Middle East, welcomed New Zealand's pledge to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2050.

On the last day of her tour to Australia, Vanuatu and New Zealand, she also underlined the joint UK / New Zealand commitment to deliver on the [Glasgow Climate Pact](#), which pledges to cut emissions and limit global warming to below 1.5°C.

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Minister for Asia and the Middle East, Amanda Milling said:

I heard first-hand in Vanuatu about the impacts of climate change in the Pacific, and the importance of supporting Pacific Island countries to build resilience.

The UK and New Zealand are working with partners to ensure those countries can access climate finance, and that Pacific Island voices are heard.

The Minister's visit to the region – to boost diplomatic and trade ties with the UK's vital Pacific partners – follows COP26 President Alok Sharma's tour last month to Australia, New Zealand and Fiji, and the meeting of Prime Ministers Boris Johnson and Jacinda Ardern in London on 1 July 2022.

At that meeting, the leaders signed a new research, science and innovation arrangement which will see both countries share expertise and develop new technologies, including in the fields of agriculture and climate-change.

As part of this agreement, the Minister announced the UK will welcome some of New Zealand's most advanced agritech companies next month to build new links, with some of the UK's leading firms visiting New Zealand on a similar mission in November.

On the UK's recent trade deal with New Zealand, Minister Milling said:

We are also looking forward to our free trade agreement entering into force and watching our trade with New Zealand soar. But this is about so much more than business opportunities. It's about the participation of indigenous people and women in trade. And it's about a greener deal; bolstering commitments to the Paris agreement and Net Zero, while encouraging investment in low-carbon tech.

Finally, on Ukraine, Minister Milling thanked New Zealand for its support in standing against Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine arguing Putin has "thrown the international rules out of the window, shattered global stability and stamped on the principle of territorial sovereignty."

She went on to add that: "We must ensure that Putin loses, and that Russian aggression is never again allowed to shatter peace, freedom and democracy in Europe."

While in New Zealand, Minister Milling visited Auckland, the Waikato and Wellington. She met Aupito William Sio, Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister for Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand, to discuss the challenges for Pasifika; Te Taumata, MFAT's Māori engagement group, and the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee.

She also attended a memorial for the former Māori Queen, Dame Te Atairangikaahu and visited several businesses in the Waikato, promoting the recently signed UK-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement.

## **Further Information**

- The UK is helping Pacific nations and others to protect the marine environment and reduce poverty through our £500m Blue Planet Fund. This will directly support delivery of the region's [2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent](#).
- At COP 26, the UK announced £274 million for a new 'Climate Action for a Resilient Asia' programme across the Indo-Pacific. This will support up to 14 million people to adapt to global warming.

- The UK also pledged £40 million to help Small Island Developing States become more resilient, including in the Pacific in November 2021.
  - The UK and New Zealand are working with partners to ensure those States can access climate finance, and that Pacific Island voices are heard. This includes collaborating with Fiji to address concerns raised through the Taskforce on Access to Climate Finance.
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## [The Rt Hon Amanda Milling MP gives speech at British High Commission in New Zealand](#)

Tēnā koutou katoa. It is wonderful to be here in New Zealand.

I've spent the last week meeting people across Australia, Vanuatu and New Zealand, experiencing the incredible hospitality of the Pacific family. It's been great to see first-hand how we're working together on shared challenges and opportunities. And I've enjoyed meeting so many people, from Ministers to scientists, businesspeople and people of the land.

Although we are half a world away from my home in Cannock Chase in the English Midlands, you might be interested to hear that my local area has a very meaningful link to New Zealand. As some of you may know, there was a large military base called Brocton camp at Cannock Chase during the First World War. It became a training centre for the New Zealand Rifle Brigade in 1917, getting soldiers ready for the horrors of battle on the Western Front. There's an Anzac Day service there every year to honour those brave troops, and it's my great privilege to attend it as the local Member of Parliament.

Those New Zealanders fought shoulder-to-shoulder with the British to defend the freedom, democracy and human rights that our nations cherish. Those shared values, and the friendship between our countries, remain just as strong today. But today, once again, democracy is under attack. Autocrats and despots are trying to undermine the values that guide our way of life. And a trio of challenges – pandemic, conflict and climate change – are destroying lives and livelihoods.

These challenges can only be addressed by countries working together. So the hand of friendship stretching across the oceans between our nations is as important today as it has ever been. I'd like to reflect on just a few aspects.

Firstly, tackling climate change and biodiversity loss is a top priority for the United Kingdom and New Zealand. We have both pledged to reach net zero by 2050. We both demonstrated our leadership and ambition at COP26. And we stand united in our commitments to deliver on the Glasgow Pact and keep 1.5 alive.

Along with mitigation efforts and net zero commitments, we know that adaptation finance is crucial to help people cope with the impacts of climate change. That's why the UK has committed more than £11 billion over five years to support developing countries. And I look forward to seeing New Zealand's new climate finance strategy published soon, following your \$1.3bn commitment.

I heard first-hand in Vanuatu about the impacts of climate change in the Pacific, and the importance of supporting Pacific Island Countries to build resilience. The UK is helping Pacific nations and others to protect the marine environment and reduce poverty through our £500m Blue Planet Fund.

At COP 26, we announced £274 million for a new 'Climate Action for a Resilient Asia' programme across the Indo-Pacific. This will support up to 14 million people to adapt to global warming. We also pledged £40 million to help Small Island Developing States become more resilient, including in the Pacific.

The UK and New Zealand are working with partners to ensure those States can access climate finance, and that Pacific Island voices are heard. This includes collaborating with Fiji to address concerns raised through the Taskforce on Access to Climate Finance.

The UK and New Zealand are also united in our desire to boost the resilience of the Indo-Pacific region. This is a key focus of British foreign policy, on climate but also on trade, security, science and more.

Together with New Zealand, we will work ever-more closely to support security and stability in the region, co-operating with our partners, including the Pacific Islands Forum. Our countries took a hugely positive step in June when we launched Partners in the Blue Pacific along with the United States, Japan and Australia. We also have a clear interest in peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.

Along with our G7 partners, the UK expressed concerns over recent threatening actions by China – in particular, live-fire exercises and economic coercion. These risk unnecessary escalation. We do not support any unilateral attempts to change the status quo, and we call on China to resolve cross-Strait differences by peaceful means.

Meanwhile the historic 'Research, Science and Innovation Arrangement' that our prime ministers signed last month will strengthen collaboration between the UK and New Zealand. Together, we will share expertise and develop new technologies – including in the fields of agriculture and climate-change.

The UK will welcome some of New Zealand's most advanced agritech companies to our shores next month, to build new links. Some of our own leading firms will head here on a similar mission in November. This is just the first of many exchanges that, I am sure, will lead to some fantastic new initiatives.

On trade, the UK is glad of New Zealand's support as we seek to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership. This

is a brilliant opportunity to deepen our access to the massive consumer markets of the Asia-Pacific region. And it's a fantastic way to boost prosperity here, and at home, as we all seek to bounce back from the pandemic.

We are also looking forward to our free trade agreement entering into force and watching our trade with New Zealand soar. But this is about so much more than business opportunities. It's about the participation of indigenous people and women in trade. And it's about a greener deal; bolstering commitments to the Paris agreement and Net Zero, while encouraging investment in low-carbon tech.

Just as importantly, our countries are equally committed to promoting and protecting the international rule of law through the trading system. Together, we will support a global system that's free from aggression and economic coercion, where the sovereignty of nations is protected, regardless of their size.

On that note, I cannot end without talking about Putin's unprovoked, illegal war in Ukraine. He's thrown the international rules out of the window, shattered global stability and stamped on the principle of territorial sovereignty. The United Kingdom and New Zealand continue to stand with Ukraine. We must ensure that Putin loses, and that Russian aggression is never again allowed to shatter peace, freedom and democracy in Europe.

So we will carry on co-ordinating on sanctions to raise the costs for Russia – targeting its economy as well as its elites to cripple Putin's war machine. And we will stand firm in our security and defence collaboration.

Our Five Eyes intelligence-sharing arrangement is a key part of this, to promote and defend our interests in cyber space, quantum computing, artificial intelligence and more.

Early this year, UK and New Zealand defence forces worked together to assist Tonga following the volcanic eruption.

In May, New Zealand deployed military personnel to the UK, to train Ukrainian soldiers to help defend their country. And I welcome yesterday's announcement that this support will be extended, with additional New Zealand teams deploying over to the UK. And that brings me back to where I started – with New Zealand troops on British soil, standing up for freedom, democracy and sovereignty.

More than a hundred years have passed since those New Zealand boots trod the paths of Cannock Chase, but our countries still stand together, just as we did then. Yes, we face a great many challenges. But there is also a great deal to be hopeful about, as we look to the future.

I can't wait to see what we achieve together.

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

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## New trading scheme cuts tariffs on hundreds of everyday products

The UK is using its post-Brexit powers to launch one of the world's most generous trading schemes with developing countries today.

The International Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan has launched the new Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS), which will extend tariff cuts to hundreds of more products exported from developing countries, going further than the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences.

This is on top of the thousands of products which developing countries can already export to the UK duty-free [and will mean 99% of goods imported from Africa, for example will enter the UK duty free].

The scheme means that a wide variety of products – from clothes and shoes to foods that aren't widely produced in the UK including olive oil and tomatoes – will benefit from lower or zero tariffs.

The Developing Countries Trading Scheme ensures that British businesses can benefit from more than £750 million per year of reduced import costs, leading to more choice and lower costs for UK consumers to help with the cost of living.

Secretary of State for International Trade Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

As an independent trading nation, we are taking back control of our trade policy and making decisions that back UK businesses, help with the cost of living, and support the economies of developing countries around the world.

UK businesses can look forward to less red-tape and lower costs, incentivising firms to import goods from developing countries.

The DCTS covers 65 countries across Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Americas including some of the poorest countries in the world.

It removes some seasonal tariffs, meaning more options for British supermarkets and shops all year round. For example, cucumbers, which can't be grown in the UK in the winter, will now be tariff-free during this period for the majority of countries in the scheme.

The scheme also simplifies complex trade rules such as rules of origin – the rules dictating what proportion of a product must be made in its country of origin. This makes it easier for businesses like family-owned textile business DBL Group from Bangladesh to export, encouraging developing

countries to play a larger role in the global trade community.

Mohammed Jabbar Managing Director of DBL Group said:

These new rules will be a game changer for us. They mean we will be able to source our cotton from many more countries than we could before, which will make the business more competitive and our supply chains a lot more resilient.

This work is part of a wider push by the UK to drive a free trade, pro-growth agenda across the globe, using trade to drive prosperity and help eradicate poverty.

This drive includes a new initiative called Platinum Partnerships, designed to grow trade between the UK and selected lower and middle-income Commonwealth countries and reduce dependency on aid. The partnerships will strengthen two-way green trade and investment, helping countries' adaptation to climate change.

The Prime Minister also recently announced a new Trade Centre of Expertise, which will bring together the best of British expertise to support partner governments, giving them the tools they need to more actively participate in the global trading system.

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## **UK Chancellor announces joint taskforce to solve the delivery of equivalent support to £400 Energy Bill Support Scheme in Northern Ireland**

News story

Chancellor Nadhim Zahawi today met with Northern Ireland Executive Ministers and officials to continue to drive progress on the delivery of equivalent support to the £400 Energy Bill Support Scheme in Northern Ireland.



- The Chancellor announced a new joint taskforce comprising of officials from UK and NIE who will be responsible for driving forward a solution over the coming weeks to ensure people of NI get support as soon as possible.
- The scheme will reduce every household's energy bills by £400, to help families with the rising cost of living.
- Attendees agreed the taskforce would look at all ways for the UK Government to deliver this support in Northern Ireland, working with the Executive and Regulator to make sure it arrives as swiftly as possible.
- Attendees agreed a shared objective in getting payments to households as quickly as possible, and the need to work collaboratively on the most effective mechanism.
- They agreed to a regular schedule of meetings until this issue is resolved.

Chancellor Nadhim Zahawi said:

"We need to keep the momentum up to get equivalent energy support to people in Northern Ireland and that's why today I've launched a joint taskforce to present practical delivery options back to Ministers. No option is off the table.

"We've got our noses to the grindstone, we're making progress, and we have a shared objective with Ministers in Northern Ireland to get this off the ground as soon as possible."

### **Further information**

The attendees of today's meeting were:

- UK Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nadhim Zahawi
- Chief Executive of Utility Regulator, John French
- Northern Ireland's Minister for the Economy, Gordon Lyons
- Northern Ireland's Minister for Communities, Deidre Hargey
- Permanent Secretary, Northern Ireland Department of Finance, Neil Gibson
- Officials from both the Northern Ireland Executive and central United Kingdom administrations

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## JCVI publishes advice on COVID-19 vaccines for autumn booster programme

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has published its advice on which vaccines should be used in this year's autumn booster programme.

All of the available boosters provide good protection against severe illness from COVID-19 and the Committee has emphasised that getting a booster in good time before the winter season is more important for those eligible than the type of vaccine that is received.

The vaccines advised for use in the autumn booster programme are:

For adults aged 18 years and above:

- Moderna mRNA (Spikevax) bivalent Omicron BA.1/Original 'wild-type' vaccine
- Moderna mRNA (Spikevax) Original 'wild-type' vaccine
- Pfizer-BioNTech mRNA (Comirnaty) Original 'wild-type' vaccine
- in exceptional circumstances, the Novavax Matrix-M adjuvanted wild-type vaccine (Nuvaxovid) may be used when no alternative clinically suitable UK-approved COVID-19 vaccine is available

For people aged 12 to 17 years:

- Pfizer-BioNTech mRNA (Comirnaty) Original 'wild-type' vaccine

For people aged 5 to 11 years:

- Pfizer-BioNTech mRNA (Comirnaty) Original 'wild-type' vaccine paediatric formulation

'Bivalent' vaccines have been developed by global manufacturers since the emergence and dominance of the Omicron variant. These vaccines contain two different antigens (substances that induce an immune response) based on two different COVID-19 strains, or variants. The original mRNA vaccines contain one antigen (monovalent), based on the original 'wild-type' strain.

Studies indicate the Moderna bivalent vaccine produces a marginally higher immune response against some variants than the Moderna mRNA Original 'wild-type' vaccine. The clinical relevance of these small differences is uncertain.

The committee will consider further bivalent vaccines for use in the programme as they are approved by the MHRA.

In its latest advice the JCVI has stated that, where feasible, it would be

preferable for a single type of booster vaccine to be offered throughout the duration of the autumn programme for simplicity of deployment.

Professor Wei Shen Lim, Chair of COVID-19 immunisation on the JCVI, said:

All of the available booster vaccines offer very good protection against severe illness from COVID-19. As more vaccines continue to be developed and approved, the JCVI will consider the benefits of including them in the UK programme.

It is important that everyone who is eligible takes up a booster this autumn, whichever vaccine is on offer. This will increase your protection against being severely ill from COVID-19 as we move into winter.

Dr Mary Ramsay, Head of Immunisation at UKHSA, said:

Although cases of COVID-19 are relatively low at present, we are expecting to see the virus circulating more widely during the winter months.

The booster is being offered to those at higher risk of severe illness and by taking up the booster vaccine this autumn, you will increase your protection ahead of the winter months, when respiratory viruses are typically at their peak.

NHS England will confirm details on how and when eligible people can access the autumn booster vaccine in due course.