



DEBATE PACK

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Debate on an e-petition relating to Deforestation in the Amazon

By Sarah Coe

Summary

A debate is scheduled for Monday 7 October at 4.30pm in Westminster Hall on a motion "That this House has considered e-petition [266638](#) relating to deforestation in the Amazon."

Daniel Zeichner MP will open the debate.

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The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

1. Deforestation in the Amazon

1.1 The petition

The text of E-petition [266638](#) is as follows:

Demand the EU & UN sanction Brazil to halt increased deforestation of the Amazon

The government of Brazil led by Bolsonaro favour the development of the Amazon rainforest over conservation, escalating deforestation. Deforestation threatens indigenous populations who live in the forest, loss of a precious and complex ecosystem and a vital carbon store that slows global warming.

Indigenous people have called for the EU to impose trade sanctions on Brazil to halt the deforestation because they fear genocide. Also, the UK parliament has recognised a climate emergency. Since the Amazon rainforest is an important carbon store, absorbing huge volumes of CO₂ each year, it's deforestation is of global significance. The intrinsic value of the rainforest should also be recognised.

Trade sanctions are used elsewhere for important issues as an effective means to force action.

1.2 Government petition response

The [Government responded](#) to the e-petition on 30 September 2019 as follows:

The United Kingdom shares concerns about deforestation in the Amazon. The Government believes these issues can be addressed most effectively through dialogue and our bilateral programmes.

The United Kingdom shares concerns about deforestation in the Amazon rainforest, and the severe impact on the climate, biodiversity and livelihoods. However, key to tackling these issues is to work with Brazil to find solutions rather than imposing sanctions.

Deforestation is an issue the United Kingdom has been dedicated to addressing in partnership with Brazil for a long time. Since 2012, the United Kingdom has invested nearly £120 million in a number of International Climate Finance programmes. These programmes help to tackle deforestation, and support Brazil's rural communities, farmers and businesses to produce food and adopt sustainable agricultural practices that prevent forest fires, protect natural habitats and improve livelihoods.

In response to the recent forest fires, the Prime Minister pledged a further £10 million at the G7 summit on 25 August. This contribution is an expansion of an existing project: Partnerships for Forests. The funding will increase the programme's support for the protection and restoration of Brazil's rainforests, including areas impacted by the recent fires. Brazil, in response to international pressure, has launched an unprecedented operation to combat the fires, deploying 43,000 military staff.

The United Kingdom firmly believes climate change is one of the most important global issues and international cooperation is vital. Brazil is an important partner in this endeavour and has a critical role to play - we must work with them to find solutions. We have

an ongoing dialogue with Brazil on these issues at both ministerial and official level.

The United Kingdom will continue to monitor the situation in the Amazon closely and raise these critical issues in our dialogue with Brazil. The Government remains committed to supporting efforts to tackle deforestation in the Amazon through our bilateral programmes.

[Foreign & Commonwealth Office.]

1.3 About the Amazon rainforest

The Amazon rainforest is a moist broadleaf tropical rainforest in the river Amazon basin of South America. This basin encompasses 7,000,000 km², of which 5,500,000 km² are covered by the rainforest. The majority of the forest (60%) is contained within Brazil.

The rainforest is a key natural resource containing one in ten known species on Earth and half of the planet's remaining tropical forests.¹ The [World Bank](#) notes that:

The Amazon rainforest, the world's largest tropical rainforest, is an important constituent of the global biosphere and a global public good that benefits the international community by supporting an array of ecosystem services. It is home to possibly a quarter of the world's terrestrial species, accounts for about 15% of global terrestrial photosynthesis, provides a major carbon sink, and drives atmospheric circulation and precipitation across South America and beyond. However, the Amazon rainforest is also one of the most threatened environments worldwide, with deforestation a particularly pressing problem, mostly in the form of agricultural expansion.²

WWF reports that some 34 million people live in the Amazon, including 385 indigenous groups which depend on its resources and services.³

Recent trends in deforestation

Deforestation has been a concern in the Amazon region for some years. According to the [New York Declaration on Forests five yearly progress report](#),⁴ published in 2019:

Between 2001–18, Brazil lost almost 55 million hectares of tree cover at a rate of 5.7 soccer fields per minute. More than 84 percent of this loss occurred in the biomes of Amazon (33 Mha of tree cover loss — an area bigger than Norway), while the Cerrado, at half the size of the Amazon, lost 13 million hectares. In the Atlantic Forest, a biome where only 12 percent of the original

¹ [WWF Amazon webpages](#) [Accessed 2 October 2019]

² Juha V. Siikamäki, Alan Krupnick, Jon Strand, Jeffrey R. Vincent, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 8775, [Willingness to pay for protection of the Amazon rainforest](#), March 2019

³ [WWF Where we work: Amazon webpages](#) [Accessed 2 October 2019]

⁴ The [New York Declaration on Forests](#) is a voluntary and non-binding international declaration to take action to halt global deforestation. It was first endorsed at the United Nations Climate Summit in September 2014. It has more than 200 endorsers: national and sub-national governments, multi-national companies, groups representing indigenous communities, and non-government organizations.

forest remains, over 5 million hectares were lost over the same period.⁵

Previous Brazilian governments have adopted a series of legal and administrative approaches aimed at reducing this which led to a decline in loss rates. As the New York Declaration progress report notes:

The Brazilian Amazon has long been hailed as a success story in global forest conservation efforts. In 2012, Brazil recorded its lowest deforestation rate in the last 20 years.⁶

The world's first two large-scale voluntary commitments to reduce deforestation were based in the Amazon: namely, the 2006 sector-wide Soy Moratorium and the 2009 company-specific Cattle Brazil: Forging Public-Private Cooperation Agreements. Nearly 50 companies have endorsed the Soy Moratorium covering 90% of the soy trade in the Brazilian Amazon, while 18 of the country's 22 largest meat processors have committed to at least one of the Cattle Agreements.⁷

The [Tropical Forest Alliance 2020 \(TFA 2020\)](#) notes that these approaches were successful, but trends in slowing forest loss have reversed in recent years:

[These efforts], combined with regulatory reforms and the creation of protected areas, contributed to a dramatic drop in deforestation across the Amazon between 2004 and 2012. In the period after 2012, deforestation has again increased, however, to varying degrees across jurisdictions.⁸

The reversal in the trend towards slowing forest loss has been particularly acute in 2019. As the New York Declaration progress report published in September 2019 notes:

[...] tree cover loss in the Amazon began to rise again in 2016 when it reached 3.7 million hectares. While the rate of loss has fallen in the past two years, it is still higher than it had been since 2005. For the Amazon, deforestation rates continued to rise in the first part of 2019 with an alarming 88 percent increase in June compared to same month the previous year.⁹

The [New Scientist reported in July](#) that more than 3700 square kilometres of forest has been deforested this year: according to preliminary satellite data the losses for the first seven months of 2019 are 16% higher than the high of 3183 square kilometres in 2016.¹⁰

⁵ New York Declaration on Forests, [Progress on Protecting and Restoring Forests: A Story of Large Commitments yet Limited Progress](#), September 2019. The assessment is researched by Declaration Partners and coordinated by Climate Focus. It has undergone an extensive internal and external peer review process.

⁶ New York Declaration on Forests, [Progress on Protecting and Restoring Forests: A Story of Large Commitments yet Limited Progress](#), September 2019

⁷ Tropical Forest Alliance 2020, [Sprint to 2020 Annual Report 2018](#)

⁸ As above

⁹ New York Declaration on Forests, [Progress on Protecting and Restoring Forests: A Story of Large Commitments yet Limited Progress](#), September 2019, p75

¹⁰ New Scientist, [Deforestation in Brazil has rocketed since Bolsonaro became President](#), 22 July 2019

Campaigners have raised concerns about these increasing deforestation rates and criticised the policies of the current Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro. For example, the [Rainforest Alliance](#) said that:

Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon is the result of many different actions, including agricultural expansion (mainly for beef production), but also illegal logging, mining, land speculation, urban development, and more. Because of complex factors—including international trade, financing, and policy decisions by the new government that have crippled environmental enforcement agencies—deforestation in the region has surged.¹¹

The New York Declaration five yearly report published in 2019 reported that:

Trends in Brazil demonstrate the fragility of forest policies in light of changing political priorities. After a change of government in 2019, deforestation in Brazil has increased due to reversals of existing legal and institutional forest protection policies and frameworks.

There has been widespread press coverage of fires in the Amazon this summer, attributed by commentators to forest clearance policies.¹² [The Rainforest Alliance](#) states that, according to the Brazilian National Institute for Space Research (INPE), satellite data has shown an 84% increase in fires compared to the same period in 2018. It said that the space agency reported that its satellite data has detected more than 72,000 fires since January 2019.¹³

1.4 Brazilian government comments

The Brazilian government set out its record on the environment and the Amazon at the climate change COP 24 in December 2018, stating that carbon emissions were set to decrease by 37% by 2025 and by 43% by 2030 (compared to 2005 levels). It noted that:

One of the main measures that contributed to Brazil's good performance has been the increase in more than 94 million hectares of protected areas in the Amazon, Cerrado, Pantanal, Caatinga, Atlantic Forest and Coastal Marine biomes from May 2016 to June 2018. Currently, there are 335 federal protected areas in the five regions of the Country, totalling more than 167 million hectares.¹⁴

Jair Bolsonaro was elected President of Brazil in October 2018 and formally took up the role in January 2019. Mr Bolsonaro is reported to be sceptical of actions to curb climate change.¹⁵ Mr Bolsonaro declared during his election campaign that he wanted to pull Brazil out of the Paris Climate Change Accord. He retreated from this position later in

¹¹ [The Rainforest Alliance response to the fires in the Amazon forest](#), 22 August 2019 [Accessed 2 October 2019]

¹² [Chaos,chaos,chaos: A journey through Bolsonaro's Amazonian inferno](#), 9 September 2019

¹³ Rainforest Alliance, [Response to the Fires in the Amazon Rainforest](#), 22 August 2019 [Accessed October 2019]

¹⁴ As above

¹⁵ [The Guardian view on the threat of Bolsonaro: tropical disaster is man-made](#), The Guardian, 26 August 2019

the campaign, however, saying he could accept the accords as long as Brazil's sovereignty in the Amazon was not threatened or challenged.¹⁶

Mr Bolsonaro also reversed his plan to merge the Agriculture and Environment Ministries, which was heavily criticised by those who feared the new department would have to serve competing agendas. Nevertheless, he issued a Presidential decree that moved the Brazilian Forestry Service, which promotes the sustainable use of forests, from the supervision of the Environment Ministry to the Agriculture Ministry.¹⁷

The President's Cabinet Agriculture and Environment Minister selections are seen by some as indicating that he may put Brazil's economic and developmental interests ahead of multilateral initiatives to curb climate change. Agriculture Minister, Tereza Cristina, was head of the 'Farm caucus' in Brazil's Congress, and Ricardo Salles, Environment Minister, has reportedly questioned figures that show deforestation rates are rising, and has emphasised national sovereignty when discussing the Paris climate deal.¹⁸

The Director of the Environment Department at the Brazilian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Leonardo Cleaver de Athayde, defended Brazil's track record and recent actions in an [article in September on deforestation and the 2019 fires](#):

Historically, Brazil has been one of the most successful countries in the world in preserving the primeval forests within its borders. At least 60 percent of Brazil's continent-sized territory of 3.3 million square miles is covered by native vegetation. Agricultural activity covers only 30 percent of our national territory, a percentage significantly lower than in other countries with large agricultural sectors—many of which used to have very large forests within their own borders as well. Our environmental legislation is one of the most rigorous in the world. Among the countries with the 10 largest land masses, Brazil is by far the one with the largest share of its territory (24.2 percent) placed under environmental protection.

There is a clear long-term, downward trend in deforestation in the Brazilian rainforest. In fact, the annual deforestation rate in the Brazilian Amazon decreased from 10,700 square miles in 2004 to 2,900 in 2018, representing a 72 percent reduction. The government of President Jair Bolsonaro has made it clear in public announcements that it is committed to fighting illegal deforestation, [...] Recent forest fires in the Amazon region in the month of August are seasonal in character. Their number is barely above the historical average of the last 20 years.¹⁹

¹⁶ ['AP Explains: Brazil's Environmental Changes under Bolsonaro'](#), VOA News, 15 May 2019.

¹⁷ ['Brazil farm lobby wins as Bolsonaro grabs control over indigenous lands'](#), Reuters, 2 January 2019,

¹⁸ ['Climate change a 'secondary' issue, says Brazil's environment minister'](#), The Guardian, 10 December 2018.

¹⁹ Leonardo Cleaver de Athayde, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Brazil, FP online article, [Don't Scapegoat Brazil Over the Environment: International threats to forcibly protect the Amazon betray ignorance about the subtle art of diplomacy](#), 30 September 2019

President Bolsonaro said in a speech to the UN on 24 September 2019 that he was committed to environmental protection and sustainable development. He acknowledged however that he wished to pursue the economic development of the Amazon, though he explained “we are open to explore our potential in a sustainable way, through partnerships that add value”. Mr Bolsonaro rejected reporting of the situation in the Amazon saying that is not being “consumed by fire”. The President called the international media’s coverage of fires in the Amazon “sensationalist” and asserted that certain countries who have raised concerns over the Amazon are acting with a “colonialist spirit”. The proposal of sanctions against Brazil for environmental reasons without consultation was “absurd”.²⁰

1.5 UK Government’s policy on protecting the Brazilian Amazon

The [Government’s response to the e-petition](#) noted that the UK has been addressing deforestation in partnership with Brazil for “a long time”. The Government has said that the UK will continue to monitor the situation in the Amazon closely and raise issues in dialogue with Brazil.

[Government Ministers said in December 2019](#) that “we are working with Brazil to help ensure it continues to protect the Amazon and those who live within it”.²¹ The UK Government supports international commitments to reduce loss of forests abroad. Ministers stated in a [PQ answered in May 2018](#) that:

The UK Government endorses the [New York Declaration on Forests](#), which aims to end natural forest loss by 2030, and is a member of the [Tropical Forest Alliance 2020](#). Alongside Germany and Norway, we have pledged \$5 billion to support countries that are reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. Through International Climate Finance, Defra has committed £210m in projects and programmes that aim to protect the world’s most biodiverse forests, for example in Brazil, Sri Lanka, Zambia and Madagascar.²²

At the G7 summit in August 2019 the UK pledged £10 million to “help step up efforts to protect and restore the Amazon rainforest in Brazil - including in areas affected by the current fires”. The Government’s press notice commented that:

The new funding builds on support the UK has already invested to restore the rainforest in Brazil and neighbouring countries and will help safeguard the huge biodiversity of animal and plant species found in the Amazon.

In addition, the PM will announce that the UK is increasing its contribution to the Green Climate Fund whose projects safeguard forests and land – including in the Amazon, reduce emissions, and

²⁰ [‘Brazilian President speaks out against ‘media lies’ surrounding Amazon fires’](#), UN News, 24 September 2019.

²¹ [Amazonia: forests and indigenous people, Written Question 201172](#), 11 December 2019

²² [Forests: Written Question 146694](#), 22 May 2019

help people cope with the effects of climate change in developing countries.

The fund supports a number of programmes to preserve natural habitats around the world – including to tackle deforestation in the Amazon rainforest in Brazil.²³

During debate on the [Amazon Forest Fires on 3 September 2019](#), Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister, Christopher Pincher told the House that Ministers had reaffirmed with Brazil's Ministers and the Ambassador the UK's commitment to working in partnership with Brazil on environmental issues. He said that:

I can confirm that we spend £120 million through our international climate finance programme. That goes to help to tackle deforestation and to help sustainable farming, and it complements the trading activities that we have with Brazil, which ensure that the Brazilian economy grows and prospers, including for those farmers, who are part and parcel of the problem, burning some of the rain forest.²⁴

He added that:

Deforestation has increased over the last few years. It has in fact been increasing in Brazil since 2015—some time before the present Government took office. I think it is right that we engage with them—that we try to persuade them to use sensible methods to reduce and stop this problem. It is an international concern, and that is why we have raised it, and will continue to raise it, with the Brazilian authorities.²⁵

On indigenous peoples in Brazil the Government has said in answer to a [PQ in July 2019](#) that:

The UK Embassy in Brazil frequently engages with the Brazilian Government on a number of issues including environment, human rights and development. We have been having positive discussions with the Ministry of Agriculture, Human Rights, Foreign Affairs, Brazilian Co-operation Agency (ABC) among others on our policies and programmes.²⁶

Aid to Brazil

The Department for International Development (DFID) is responsible for UK aid programmes. DFID has no programme inside Brazil itself but [DFID's Development tracker](#) webpages [Accessed 2 October 2019] state that:

Together we aim to have a positive impact on global issues such as growth and trade, conflict and security, climate change and sustainable development. We focus on areas where Brazil has strong domestic experience and expertise which is well matched to in-country demand. We are also working to strengthen our partnership with Brazil to shape and deliver the development agenda in international processes - in the G20, Doha and the UN.

²³ .GOV.UK press release, [PM steps up UK efforts to protect the Amazon rainforest](#), 26 August 2019

²⁴ Amazon Forest fires HC Deb 3 September 2019. Vol 664. [cc6-8](#)

²⁵ Amazon Forest fires HC Deb 3 September 2019. Vol 664. [cc6-8](#)

²⁶ Brazil Indigenous peoples, HC Deb 18 July 2019 Written Question [277312](#)

1.6 Trade issues

The potential for a free trade agreement between the European Union and Mercosur (including Brazil) has led to international attention being given to Brazil's environmental and agricultural practices: see for example:

- France 24, [Farmers, environmentalists slam 'sell-out' EU-Mercosur trade deal](#), 29 June 2019
- Euronews, [Brazil to act on deforestation if concerns confirmed, minister says](#), 4 July 2019
- Euractiv, [EU agriculture chief slams 'misinformation' on Mercosur trade deal](#), 15 July 2019

In September 2019 it was reported that Austrian MPs were "demanding" that Austria veto the ratification of the Mercosur agreement.²⁷

There is however potential for trade deals such as the Mercosur deal to augment standards. For example, there are reported to be provisions in the Mercosur agreement requiring any eggs imported to the EU under the deal to meet EU welfare standards for laying hens.²⁸

Asked during debate on the [Amazon Forest fires on 3 September](#) by SNP Member Hannah Bardell about Irish and French attempts to block the Mercosur trade agreement if Brazil does not honour its environmental commitments, FCO Minister Christopher Pincher said that:

My concern is to make sure that the trade with our two countries prospers and that the Mercosur arrangement succeeds. It will result in the removal of something like 91% of present tariffs. That can only be to the benefit of Brazilian farmers and to the benefit of the Brazilian economy. If we help to ensure that these sensible trade arrangements are made, those fires can be put out and they will stay out.²⁹

He said that his message to the Brazilian Ambassador at a planned meeting on 4 September would be that:

we want to help Brazil with its difficulties in these terrible fires, but also that we want to trade with it, because that is a way of building its economy and ensuring that the sorts of fires that are currently raging are put out and stay out.³⁰

In August 2019, the UK [Government launched a new £20 million trade facilitation programme](#) to support Brazilian businesses to export, which it says will help boost trade with countries including the UK.³¹

²⁷ BBC News, [Austria blocks EU-Mercosur trade deal with South America](#), 19 September 2019

²⁸ [EU impose hen welfare standards on egg imports for the first time](#), The Guardian, 2 October 2019

²⁹ [HC Deb, 3 September 2019, c6](#)

³⁰ *ibid*

³¹ GOV.UK press release, [UK launches programme to promote trade with Brazil](#), 20 August 2019

2. Press articles

[Don't Scapegoat Brazil Over the Environment](#)

Foreign Policy, 30 September 2019

Leonardo Cleaver de Athayde (the director of the environmental department at Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

[Brazilian President speaks out against 'media lies' surrounding Amazon fires](#)

UN News, 24 September 2019

[Brazil tries to refresh its image after Amazon fires](#)

Financial Times, 22 September 2019

[Amazon fires: Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro to use UN speech to reject criticism over response to blaze ravaging rainforest](#)

Independent, 22 September 2019

[Deliberate drowning of Brazil's rainforest is worsening climate change](#)

New Scientist, 18 September 2019

[Brazil environment minister to meet US climate denier group before UN summit](#)

Guardian, 13 September 2019

[Brazil foreign minister says 'there is no climate change catastrophe'](#)

Reuters.com, 11 September 2019

['Chaos, chaos, chaos': a journey through Bolsonaro's Amazon inferno](#)

Guardian, 9 September 2019

[Amazon fires are 'true apocalypse', says Brazilian archbishop](#)

Guardian, 5 September 2019

[Amazon fires: Almost 4,000 new blazes started across Brazil in 48 hours after ban on burning forest land](#)

Independent, 2 September 2019

[Brazilian Amazon deforestation surges to break August records](#)

Guardian, 27 August 2019

[How Amazon forest loss may affect water—and climate—far away](#)

National Geographic, 27 August 2019

[Trade deals could combat Brazil's Amazon deforestation](#)

Financial Times, 22 August 2019

[Fires in the Amazon could be part of a doomsday scenario that sees the rainforest spewing carbon into the atmosphere and speeding up climate change even more](#)

National Geographic, 21 August 2019

[Record 84 per cent yearly increase in Amazon fires blamed on deforestation in Brazil](#)

Daily Telegraph, 21 August 2019

[Norway to halt €30 million Amazon subsidy, saying Brazil 'broke agreement' on deforestation](#)

France 24, 16 August 2019

[Who Will Save the Amazon \(and How\)?](#)

Foreign Policy, 05 August 2019

[Deforestation in Brazil has rocketed since Bolsonaro became president](#)

New Scientist, 22 July 2019

[Brazil Was a Global Leader on Climate Change. Now It's a Threat](#)

Foreign Policy, 4 January 2019

[Brazil reveals highest deforestation figures in a decade as activists warn Bolsonaro will make issue worse](#)

Independent, 24 November 2018

3. Parliamentary coverage

3.1 Statements and debates

[G7 Summit](#)

Statement on the G7 summit in Biarritz.

03 Sep 2019 | Ministerial statements | House of Commons | 664 cc23-48

[The Global Resource Initiative taskforce](#)

18 Jul 2019 | Written statements | House of Commons | HCWS1739

Made by: Dr Thérèse Coffey (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Environment)

The Global Resource Initiative taskforce

In the 25 Year Environment Plan, the Government committed to establishing the Global Resource Initiative (GRI) to identify actions across supply chains that will improve the sustainability of products and reduce deforestation and other environmental degradation.

The GRI Taskforce will put forward recommendations for how key sectors and stakeholders can best achieve the transformative change necessary to realise the GRI ambition on sustainable supply chains. Palm oil and cocoa are key commodities for which viable measures of sustainability already exist. The Taskforce will look at a wider range of key commodities and supply chain measures.

The GRI Taskforce is meeting for the first time today and will be chaired by Sir Ian Cheshire. Sir Ian will be joined by business and environmental leaders from organisations including Legal & General, McDonalds, Cargill, Tesco, the Green Finance Institute, WWF and NGO Forest Coalition.

The GRI presents an opportunity to transform the UK's approach to sustainable land use and support international commitments on climate and biodiversity, and the Sustainable Development Goals. It can create a model for change that inspires other countries and galvanises wider international action on nature and climate change. The Government anticipates a report in 2020 which can help shape global policies due to be agreed during 2020 and 2021.

[Climate Change, the Environment and Global Development](#)

10 July 2019 | Parliamentary proceedings | 663 cc363-410

3.2 PQs

[Brazil: Climate Change Convention](#)

30 Sep 2019 | 290298

Asked by: Lyn Brown

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 9 September 2019 to Question 284857 on Brazil: Climate Change Convention, what discussion he has had with his Brazilian counterpart on that Government's steps to meet its international obligations under (a) Article 4 and (b) Article 5 of the Paris Agreement.

Answering member: Christopher Pincher | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The United Kingdom was pleased to see Brazil reaffirm their commitment to the Paris Agreement at the G20, supporting vital international cooperation on climate change. We regularly engage with the Brazilian Government on many environmental issues and are committed to working together to deliver low carbon growth. Furthermore, we have invested over £120 million in International Climate Programmes which will help limit deforestation, prevent forest fires, implement the Forestry Code, and promote sustainable land use.

[Amazonia: Fires](#)

09 Sep 2019 | 285381

Asked by: Andrea Jenkyns

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans the Government has to provide assistance to Brazil to help combat forest fires in the Amazon region.

Answering member: Zac Goldsmith | Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The UK Government is working with Brazil to help ensure it protects the Amazon. We have invested nearly £120 million of our international climate finance in projects to limit deforestation, support local and indigenous people, prevent forest fires and implement the Forest Code in the Amazon, Atlantic Forest and Cerrado biomes.

Following the Amazon fires the UK has also recently engaged with the Brazilian Government and has pledged a further £10 million to fight deforestation.

[Rain Forests: Brazil](#)

09 Sep 2019 | 284821

Asked by: Andrew Rosindell

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions her Department is holding with the Government of Brazil to help stop deforestation in the Amazon.

Answering member: Zac Goldsmith | Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The UK Government recognises the importance of protecting rainforests and has a long and proud history of supporting action to combat deforestation. The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan, published last year, sets out work to protect the world's forests, support sustainable agriculture and move towards zero-deforestation supply chains.

Brazil is one of our priority countries for both climate change and biodiversity engagement, and the UK Embassy in Brazil leads our engagement with the Brazilian Government on the environment. We have been having positive discussions with the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply, who are keen to continue our partnership to promote sustainable agricultural practices to combat deforestation rates. The first phase of our Low-carbon Agriculture programme (£24.9 million), completed in May this year, reached over 18,500 beneficiaries in the Amazon and Atlantic forest biomes and delivered a seven-fold increase in livestock productivity, while avoiding the clearance of 175,000 hectares of land and reducing 52% of carbon emissions. An additional £30 million has been committed to expand project activities to a second phase, taking place in two other major biomes in Brazil – Cerrado and Caatinga.

Brazil will continue to be an important partner in negotiations at the forthcoming UN climate summits in Chile this December (the 25th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, or COP 25) and again at the significant COP 26 in late 2020, where we hope to raise the level of global ambition on climate change five years on from the landmark Paris Agreement in 2015.

[Amazon Forest Fires](#)

3 September 2019 | Vol 664 cc6-8

Asked by: Chris Law

What recent discussions he has had with his Brazilian counterpart on the forest fires in the Amazon rainforest.

Asked by: Daniel Zeichner

What diplomatic steps his Department is taking to help tackle the fires in the Amazon rainforest.

Asked by: Hannah Bardell

What recent discussions he has had with his Brazilian counterpart on the forest fires in the Amazon rainforest.

Answering Member: Christopher Pincher | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

On 27 August, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary spoke to the Brazilian Foreign Minister, Mr Araújo. I will also be seeing the Brazilian ambassador, Mr Arruda, tomorrow, to reaffirm our commitment to working in partnership with Brazil on a range of issues, including the environment. In response to the very serious fires, the Prime Minister announced at the G7 £10 million for protection and restoration of the rain forest. That is in addition to the £120 million of funding we provide through our other programmes.

Asked by: Chris Law

While we welcome the £10 million that the UK Government have committed to help to restore the Amazonian rain forest, it is paltry compared with the amount spent on advertising for the Brexit debacle. Can the Foreign Secretary tell me whether the money is spent by local partners in a way that ensures that indigenous people will take charge of the process to reforest their homes and protect our planet? What further funding is he willing to pledge today?

Answering Member: Christopher Pincher | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

I welcome the hon. Gentleman's passion for the issue. I can confirm that we spend £120 million through our international climate finance programme. That goes to help to tackle deforestation and to help sustainable farming, and it complements the trading activities that we have with Brazil, which ensure that the Brazilian economy grows and prospers, including for those farmers, who are part and parcel of the problem, burning some of the rain forest.

Asked by: Daniel Zeichner

Over 120,000 people have already petitioned this Parliament, urging trade sanctions to be used against Brazil to put pressure on it. Given that a Minister was in Brazil recently, what pressure was put on by this Government?

Answering Member: Christopher Pincher | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The Minister of State, Department for International Trade, my hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth West (Conor Burns), was there as part of our international trade obligations, to ensure that we build trade with our strategic partners, such as Brazil. I will be seeing the Brazilian ambassador tomorrow and making clear that we want to help Brazil with its difficulties in these terrible fires, but also that we want to trade with it, because that is a way of building its economy and ensuring that the sorts of fires that are currently raging are put out and stay out.

Asked by: Hannah Bardell

Last week, both the Taoiseach and French President said that they will attempt to block the Mercosur trade agreement if Brazil does not honour its environmental commitments. Does the Minister agree that the burning of the Amazon is a human and environmental tragedy that requires a global solution and this is no time for fragile male egos or

social media spats? What steps has he taken to ensure that situations such as these receive an urgent and immediate multilateral response now and in the future?

Answering Member: Christopher Pincher | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

I hope that the hon. Lady will not think that my response is in any way macho. My concern is to make sure that the trade with our two countries prospers and that the Mercosur arrangement succeeds. It will result in the removal of something like 91% of present tariffs. That can only be to the benefit of Brazilian farmers and to the benefit of the Brazilian economy. If we help to ensure that these sensible trade arrangements are made, those fires can be put out and they will stay out.

Asked by: Vicky Ford

It has been suggested that changes to trade flows between the US and China may be fuelling some of the Amazon forest fires. Does my right hon. Friend agree that all leading nations should be working together to stop that devastation? What conversations are taking place with other leading countries?

Answering Member: Christopher Pincher | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary met other Foreign Ministers at Gymnich earlier in the week. He has made clear the concern that we have about those fires. He has also made absolutely clear the importance that we believe trade has to building economies in South America and in the far east, which encourages a better response to such tragedies.

Asked by: James Gray

Deforestation in the Amazon is indeed a catastrophe of global and generational proportions. We must of course do the right things about it and I very much welcome the pressure that the Minister has described, but is he not also aware of the fact that the deforestation of the Amazon has decreased quite considerably over the last 20 years, and that while it was very, very bad, it is very much less bad than it was; and equally that the level of decrease, therefore, in the size of the forest has been reduced? Does the Minister therefore agree that this is a domestic matter for the Brazilian Government, and that we must persuade them to do the right thing, rather than confronting or berating them?

Answering Member: Christopher Pincher | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

I certainly think it is better to talk than to engage in megaphone hectoring. Deforestation has increased over the last few years. It has in fact been increasing in Brazil since 2015—some time before the present Government took office. I think it is right that we engage with them—that we try to persuade them to use sensible methods to reduce and

stop this problem. It is an international concern, and that is why we have raised it, and will continue to raise it, with the Brazilian authorities.

Asked by: Mrs Pauline Latham

I have spent some of the summer in the Ecuadorian rain forest —part of the same Amazon rain forest that we are talking about. What other countries have made representations to Brazil about the damage that it is doing to the world, not just to Brazil?

Answering Member: Christopher Pincher | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The fires that are currently raging do not just affect Brazil; they also affect, for example, Bolivia. Bolivia is concerned about this, as is Venezuela, Peru and Colombia. So I think an international response is helpful. Certainly, those neighbouring countries that can help Brazil with its difficulties should be encouraged to do so.

Asked by: Helen Goodman

The fires have affected 650 million acres of Amazon rain forest. In his answer just now, the Minister revealed that he did not understand that the problem with the Mercosur trade deal is that cutting beef tariffs incentivises destruction of the rain forest. What proposals will the Government be putting forward at the Chile conference on climate change in November?

Answering Member: Christopher Pincher | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

As the hon. Lady should know, high agricultural tariffs hurt the poorest. That will only encourage them to do the easy thing, which is to burn land, rather than to farm it sustainably and protect the rain forest. Mercosur is a sensible free trade agreement which should be encouraged, and I trust that in the fullness of time we also will undertake a free trade deal with Brazil—more details of that, I am sure, are to come.

[Rain Forests: Conservation](#)

22 Jul 2019 | 278388

Asked by: Sir Greg Knight

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent diplomatic steps his Department has taken to help preserve rainforests.

Answering member: Dr Andrew Murrison | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The British Government is committed to the preservation of rainforests, and engages with governments around the world on the environment. For example, our posts in Brazil frequently engage with the Brazilian Government on a number of environmental issues including deforestation. We have had positive discussions with the Ministry of

Agriculture and work closely with them on our International Climate Finance programmes.

Furthermore, we are working with Brazil to help ensure it continues to protect the Amazon and have invested nearly £120 million through the International Climate Finance programme on projects to limit deforestation, prevent forest fires and implement the Forest Code in the Amazon, Atlantic Forest and Cerrado biomes.

[Brazil: Indigenous Peoples](#)

18 Jul 2019 | 277312

Asked by: Fiona Bruce

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what policies his Department has on the provision of funding for the low income indigenous peoples of the Amazon basin in Brazil.

Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Department for International Development

The UK Government is working with Brazil to help ensure it continues to protect the Amazon and have invested nearly £120 million through the International Climate Fund on projects to limit deforestation, support indigenous people and other forest communities, prevent forest fires and implement the Forest Code in the Amazon, Atlantic Forest and Cerrado biomes.

The UK Embassy in Brazil frequently engages with the Brazilian Government on a number of issues including environment, human rights and development. We have been having positive discussions with the Ministry of Agriculture, Human Rights, Foreign Affairs, Brazilian Co-operation Agency (ABC) among others on our policies and programmes.

DFID does not give direct funding to Brazil, focussing instead on a long-term development partnership with Brazil to deliver the Global Goals internationally.

[South America: Roman Catholic Church](#)

15 Jul 2019 | HL16815

Asked by: Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the implications of the forthcoming Roman Catholic Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazonian Region for (1) the survival of indigenous people, (2) the conservation of the tropical rainforest, (3) bio-diversity, and (4) responsible human development, across state frontiers in that region.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We welcome the Catholic Church's focus on cultural, environmental, economic and social issues in the Amazon, and will consider the

outcome of the Synod with interest. The UK is working with Brazil to help ensure it continues to protect the Amazon and has invested nearly £120 million through the International Climate Fund on projects to limit deforestation, prevent forest fires and implement the Forestry Code in the Amazon, Atlantic Forest and Cerrado biomes.

We are also committed to promoting and defending the human rights of all individuals and regularly participate in discussions regarding human rights in various United Nations fora, including the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council.

[Forests: Carbon Emissions](#)

15 Jul 2019 | 273790

Asked by: Seema Malhotra

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings of The global tree restoration potential report, published in Science on 5 July 2019 that there are 1.7 billion hectares of treeless land on which 1.2 trillion native tree saplings would naturally grow, providing immense potential for tree-planting as a cheap and effective strategy to tackle climate change; and if he will make a statement.

Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The UK Government recognises the huge potential for nature based solutions in tackling climate change while also supporting biodiversity. Trees are a major contributor to nature-based carbon sequestration. There are other natural sequesters including mangroves, sea grasses, salt marshes, soil and peatlands.

Through the UK's International Climate Finance (ICF, £5.8bn between 2016-2021) the UK funds several programmes in developing countries that use tree-planting as a strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and generating economic benefits for rural communities. For example, Defra's investments are expected to restore 500,000 hectares of forest generating 70 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions savings. In Brazil, Defra has invested £55m to help rural farmers restore nearly 200,000 hectares of forest in the Amazon, Atlantic Forests, Cerrado and Caatinga biomes through the implementation of low-carbon agricultural practices. Defra has also invested £10 million to restore up to 20,000 hectares of mangrove forest in Madagascar and Indonesia and recently announced a further £12.75m to restore mangroves across Latin America and the Caribbean.

[Brazil: Rain Forests](#)

09 Jul 2019 | 272247

Asked by: Faisal Rashid

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to his Brazilian counterpart on protecting the Amazon rainforest.

Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Our posts in Brazil frequently engage with the Brazilian Government on a number of environmental issues including deforestation. We have been having positive discussions with the Ministry of Agriculture and work closely with them on our International Climate Fund programmes.

We are working with Brazil to help ensure it continues to protect the Amazon and have invested nearly £120 million through the International Climate Fund on projects to limit deforestation, prevent forest fires and implement the Forestry Code in the Amazon, Atlantic Forest and Cerrado biomes.

[Brazil: Forests](#)

10 Jun 2019 | 259090

Asked by: Kerry McCarthy

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions the Government has had with international counterparts in the last 12 months on tackling the deforestation of the Cerrado savannah.

Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The UK has worked closely with Brazil's Ministries of Environment and Agriculture, Livestock and Supply to deliver a number of climate change mitigation and avoided deforestation programmes, including in the Cerrado savannah.

For example, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has invested £10 million of international climate finance in the Reducing Deforestation in the Brazilian Cerrado Programme, which ran from 2012 to 2018 in partnership with the World Bank. The programme has successfully enabled 38,017 farmers to enrol on the Rural Environmental Registry in 43 municipalities in order to improve natural resource management and environmental compliance in the Cerrado. The programme also strengthened capacity to prevent and combat forest fires by developing a state of the art monitoring and warning system and supporting twelve municipalities and three Protected Areas to properly manage and combat forest fires.

Our current involvement in the Cerrado includes phase 2 of the Rural Sustentável programme, which will start implementation in July. The programme aims to support small and medium-sized farmers in adopting low-carbon agriculture in the Cerrado and Caatinga biomes in order to reduce deforestation. It is being delivered in partnership with

Inter-American Development Bank and Brazil's agricultural research agency, with whom we have regular discussions.

[Forests: Conservation](#)

30 Apr 2019 | 247579

Asked by: Mr Jim Cunningham

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help prevent deforestation in (a) Brazil, (b) the Democratic Republic of Congo and (c) Indonesia.

Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Defra works alongside the Department for International Development and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to prevent deforestation overseas. Together, our three departments have committed to spending £5.8 billion in international climate finance (ICF) between 2016 and 2021, which includes programmes that aim to reduce emissions from deforestation and land use change. Since the ICF began in 2011, the UK has spent just over £800 million on forest and land use programmes, which includes projects that aim to reduce deforestation in Brazil, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Indonesia.

For example, the UK has made a £118 million commitment to support forests and sustainable land use in Brazil, focused on State governments and creating new businesses. This includes Defra's £64.9 million investment that aims to protect over 200,000 hectares of forest in the Amazon, Atlantic Forest and Cerrado regions and to support over 5,000 farmers to transition into low carbon sustainable agriculture.

Through its Blue Forests programme, Defra is investing £10.1 million, to reduce deforestation of mangroves habitats in Madagascar and Indonesia. The programme aims to protect around 20,000 hectares of mangrove forests; deliver around 13.9 million tonnes of carbon dioxide savings and benefit over 100,000 people.

The UK has also invested £115 million in the BioCarbon Fund – Initiative for Sustainable Forested Landscapes which seeks to improve landscape management and reduce emissions from the forest and land use sector in countries including Indonesia, while promoting alternative livelihoods that help take the pressure off the country's primary forests and peatlands.

The UK has also invested in the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility Carbon Fund, which includes both Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The UK's share of payments through the Fund will be up to about £20 million, phased over several years, if Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of Congo successfully preserve their forests and deliver verified emissions reductions.

3.3 Early Day Motion

EDM 2668 (session 2017-19)

Graham P Jones

25 July 2019

[BRAZIL DEFORESTATION](#)

That this House condemns the policies pursued by the Administration of President Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil, which are destroying the Amazon rainforest; notes that more than 3,700 square kilometres of forest has been deforested in 2019 with July being the worst month on record so far; further condemns the violence used against indigenous populations in those areas, which has been sanctioned by the leader who should protect those populations; and asks the Foreign Secretary to raise the matter with his Brazilian counterpart at the earliest opportunity.

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