

Debate Pack

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Deforestation in the Amazon

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1

Deforestation in the Amazon

A debate is scheduled for Wednesday 23 June at 9.30am in Westminster Hall on deforestation in the Amazon.

Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP will open the debate.

1.1

About the Amazon rainforest

The Amazon rainforest is a moist broadleaf tropical rainforest in the river Amazon basin of South America. It spans around 40% of South America and encompasses 7,000,000 km², of which 5,500,000 km² are covered by the rainforest. It covers eight different countries but the majority of the forest (60%) is contained within Brazil, followed by Peru with 13% and Bolivia and Colombia with around 7% each. As such the concerns over deforestation in the Amazon are focused on Brazil, which is the focus of this debate pack.

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

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

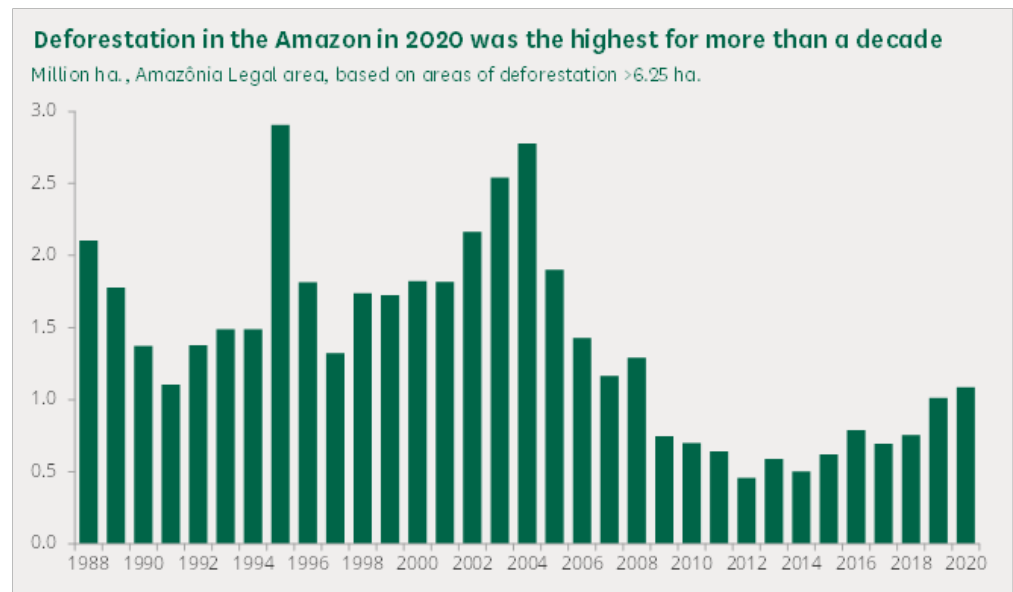
² [Juha V. Siikamäki, Alan Krupnick, Jon Strand, Jeffrey R. Vincent, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 8775, Willingness to pay for protection of the Amazon rainforest, March 2019](#)

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

1.2

Recent trends in deforestation in Brazil

Annual rates of deforestation in Brazil's Amazônia Legal area fell from more than 2.5 million hectares in both 2003 and 2004 to below 0.5 million hectares in 2012. They have generally increased since then and reached 1.1 million hectares in 2020. This was the highest figure since 2008. Much of the recent increase in deforestation has been in [Pará state](#) in the north east of Brazil. This contributed 63% of the total increase between 2017 and 2020.



Source: [TerraBrasillis Deforestation Dashboard](#)

[Global Forest Watch](#) estimates that between 2002 and 2020 Brazil lost 26.2 million hectares of primary humid forest or 7.7% of the total area.

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 on Forests five yearly progress report](#),⁴ published in 2019 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.⁵

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.

⁵ [New York Declaration on Forests, Progress on Protecting and Restoring Forests: A Story of Large Commitments yet Limited Progress, September 2019](#)

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.⁶

The [Tropical Forest Alliance 2020 \(TFA 2020\)](#) noted 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.⁷

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

[..] 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.⁸

The conservation and environmental science news platform [Mongabay reported in May 2021](#) that deforestation rates for April 2021 were higher than for 2020; specifically that deforestation in the Brazilian portion of the Amazon amounted to 581 square kilometres in April 2021, a 43% increase over April 2020. The article also highlighted however, a debate on whether the longer term trend is for increasing or decreasing deforestation on 2020 levels

However, by INPE's [Brazil's national space research institute] count, deforestation is still pacing behind last year's rate: When measured since the start of the "deforestation year" — which begins August 1 — 4,640 square kilometers of rainforest has been lost, a decline of 15% for the nine-month period.

But the trend reported by INPE is not matched by data from Imazon, a Brazilian organization that independently monitors deforestation. Imazon's data shows eight straight months of rising deforestation:

⁶ [Tropical Forest Alliance 2020, Sprint to 2020 Annual Report 2018](#)

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

⁸ [New York Declaration on Forests, Progress on Protecting and Restoring Forests: A Story of Large Commitments yet Limited Progress, September 2019](#)

Through the end of March, Amazon puts forest loss as 33% above last year's level.⁹

The article also summarised deforestation rates since Mr Bolsonaro was elected in January 2019:

Deforestation has accelerated sharply since Bolsonaro took office January 1, 2019. Based on deforestation alert data, forest clearing during his administration to date is about 98% higher than the same period of time under his predecessor, and 206% higher than Dilma Rousseff's first 16 months in office.¹⁰

Campaigners have regularly 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

Amazon fires

There was widespread press coverage of fires in the Amazon in 2019, which were attributed by commentators to forest clearance policies.¹² [The Rainforest Alliance](#) stated that, according to the Brazilian National Institute for Space Research (INPE), satellite data showed an 84% increase in fires compared to the same period in 2018.¹³ In response to the 2019 fires seven countries which form part of the Amazon forest signed the [Leticia Pact](#) in October 2019, aimed protecting the forest through increased regional cooperation.

1.3

Brazilian government policy

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

⁹ [Mongabay, Amazon deforestation jumps sharply in April, 8 May 2021](#)

¹⁰ [Mongabay, Amazon deforestation jumps sharply in April, 8 May 2021](#)

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

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 was 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 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 Director of the Environment Department at the Brazilian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Leonardo Cleaver de Athayde, defended Brazil's track record and 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,

¹⁴ [Rainforest Alliance, Response to the Fires in the Amazon Rainforest, 22 August 2019](#)

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

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',](#)

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.¹⁸

Ending illegal deforestation in Brazil

In May 2021, [Mr Bolsonaro wrote](#) to President Biden recognising recent increases in deforestation rates and committing to end illegal deforestation in Brazil by 2030, highlighting the need for economic support to do so.¹⁹ However, concerns have been raised by stakeholders regarding a number of legislative changes to land and forest laws proposed or supported by the Bolsonaro Government.

Professor Philip Fearnside from National Institute for Research in Amazonia (INPA) wrote in a May 2021 article, [‘Zero illegal deforestation’ – One more Bolsonaro distortion](#), that proposed legislative changes could result in increases in unsustainable legal deforestation, that would previously have been illegal.²⁰

The proposed changes are set out in a number of Bills currently before the Brazilian Parliament. [WWF believes](#) they “will destroy the legal framework that has enabled Brazil to control deforestation in the past, making it impossible to control deforestation in the Amazon for the next decade”. This includes [legislation in the following areas](#), as set out by WWF :

- Extending the deadline for regularizing illegally occupied land from 2011 to 2014
- Opening of indigenous lands for activities with a high environmental impact, which are currently prohibited including agricultural conversion, dam construction and mineral exploitation
- Ending the requirement to consider the indirect impacts (such as increased deforestation) of major projects
- Reducing the area of indigenous land and protected areas
- A large number of bills aimed at modifying Brazil’s Forestry Code.²¹

¹⁸ [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](#)

¹⁹ [‘Brazilian President speaks out against ‘media lies’ surrounding Amazon fires’, UN News, 24 September 2019.](#)

²⁰ [Mongabay Series, ‘Zero illegal deforestation’ – One more Bolsonaro distortion \(commentary\), 3 May 2021](#)

²¹ [WWF Policy Brief, Legislative package supported by the Bolsonaro Government will undermine the Paris Agreement, 18 April 2021](#)

Environment Bill forest risk commodities provisions

Changes to Brazilian land law may be relevant to policy changes in the UK. The [Environment Bill](#), as introduced in the House of Lords, includes provisions (Clause 109 and Schedule 16) banning UK business from using specific “forest risk commodities” unless they were produced “in compliance with relevant local laws”. These are defined as laws relating to land use or land ownership. The [Explanatory Notes](#) for the Bill state that “the effect of this definition is that the commodity must be sourced from land that is legally occupied or used”.²² Changes to land law in Brazil may have implications for the implementation and coverage of the proposed legislation in the UK.

Further details on the forest commodities provisions in the Bill can be found in the [Commons Library Briefing on the Environment Bill](#).

1.4

UK Government’s policy on protecting the Brazilian Amazon

The [Government’s response to e-petition 266638](#) demanding the EU & UN sanction Brazil to halt increased deforestation of the Amazon, from 2019, 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”.²³ 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.²⁴

²² [Environment Bill \[HL Bill 16\] 26 May 2021](#)

²³ [Amazonia: forests and indigenous people. Written Question 201172, 11 December 2019](#)

²⁴ [Forests: Written Question 146694, 22 May 2019](#)

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 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.²⁵

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.²⁶

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.²⁷

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

²⁵ [.GOV.UK press release, PM steps up UK efforts to protect the Amazon rainforest, 26 August 2019](#)

²⁶ [Amazon Forest fires HC Deb 3 September 2019, Vol 664, cc6-8](#)

²⁷ [Amazon Forest fires HC Deb 3 September 2019, Vol 664, cc6-8](#)

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.²⁸

The Government's response to an October 2020 [Parliamentary Question](#) on dialogue between Ministers and their Brazilian counterparts on climate change and protecting the Amazon rainforest stated:

On 7 October, the Foreign Secretary held a strategic dialogue with his Brazilian counterpart which covered a number of topics of mutual interest, including trade, security and human rights. The Foreign Secretary raised the issue of climate change and the need to protect the Amazon from further deforestation. We run major programmes on sustainable agriculture and deforestation with various stakeholders in Brazil that totalled £259 million between 2012 and 2020. Climate change is one of the most important global issues, and international co-operation is vital to tackling it. As COP26 president, the UK will continue to work in partnership with Brazil on this important issue.²⁹

With regard to the proposed legislative changes in Brazil, a topical question on 15 June 2021, from Chris Grayling, raised concerns that “far from giving greater protection to the Amazon rainforest, the Brazilian Government appear to be moving in a direction that will allow greater deforestation”, and called for increased protection. The [Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, responded](#) as follows:

My right hon. Friend is absolutely right. On the positive side, we welcome President Bolsonaro's commitment to reach zero illegal deforestation by 2030, and we are working with the Brazilian Government to address some of the underlying factors that fuel deforestation, including trying to get sustainable production of agricultural commodities—an issue not just in Brazil but around the world. Through international finance programmes, we have committed £259 million to help protect the Amazon, which has already enabled clearance of 430,000 acres to be avoided.³⁰

Aid to Brazil

The [Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Development Tracker](#) provides details of UK aid projects in the Amazon and Brazil.

This includes the [Partnerships for Forest Programme](#), funded by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. It is due to run until 2023 and is now fully operational in Brazil, Columbia and Peru. In Latin

²⁸ [Brazil Indigenous peoples, HC Deb 18 July 2019 Written Question 277312](#)

²⁹ [HC Deb 13 October 2020 Vol 682 c147](#)

³⁰ [HC Deb 15 June 2021 Vol 697 c120](#)

America, the project [is seeking to ensure 2.1m ha of land is under sustainable management, and to mobilise £46.5 million of private investment](#)

DEFRA has also funded two phases of the Low Carbon Agriculture for avoided deforestation and poverty reduction project in Brazil. From 2013 to 2016, [around £25 million](#) was provided from the [International Climate Finance](#) to support small and medium size farmers to [implement forest restoration and low carbon agriculture in the Amazon and Atlantic Forest biomes](#). From 2017 to 2024, [DEFRA has committed £37.4 million as a follow-up phase](#). However, this will operate in other areas in Brazil, the Cerrado and Caatinga biomes, as opposed to the Amazon biome.

2

Press articles

Nature Communications

[Deforestation reduces rainfall and agricultural revenues in the Brazilian Amazon](#)

10 May 2021

BBC News Online

[Brazil's Amazon: Deforestation rises ahead of dry season](#)

7 May 2021

Science Daily

[Brazilian Amazon released more carbon than it stored in 2010s](#)

30 April 2021

Independent

[Climate crisis: Deforestation of Amazon rainforest has accelerated since Bolsonaro took office, report finds](#)

28 April 2021

National Geographic

[Amazon rainforest now appears to be contributing to climate change](#)

12 March 2021

[Letter] Nature Economy and Evolution

[The Brazilian Amazon deforestation rate in 2020 is the greatest of the decade](#)

21 December 2020

Guardian

[Amazon deforestation surges to 12-year high under Bolsonaro](#)

30 November 2020

Nature

[When will the Amazon hit a tipping point?](#)

25 February 2020

Foreign Policy

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

30 September 2019

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

UN News

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

24 September 2019

FT [subscription]

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

22 September 2019

Independent

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

22 September 2019

3 Parliamentary coverage

3.1 PQs

[Topical Questions](#)

Asked by: Chris Grayling

My right hon. Friend knows my concern about the impact of deforestation around the world. At the moment I am particularly concerned about what is happening in Brazil, where, far from giving greater protection to the Amazon rainforest, the Brazilian Government appear to be moving in a direction that will allow greater deforestation. Please will he take every step possible to put pressure on the Brazilian Government to ensure that that does not happen, and that protections for the Amazon are increased, not reduced?

Answered by: Dominic Raab | Department: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

My right hon. Friend is absolutely right. On the positive side, we welcome President Bolsonaro's commitment to reach zero illegal deforestation by 2030, and we are working with the Brazilian Government to address some of the underlying factors that fuel deforestation, including trying to get sustainable production of agricultural commodities—an issue not just in Brazil but around the world. Through international finance programmes, we have committed £259 million to help protect the Amazon, which has already enabled clearance of 430,000 acres to be avoided.

HC Deb 15 June 2021 | Vol 697 c120

[Brazil: Environmental Protection](#)

Asked by: Timms, Stephen

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of Brazilian (a) deforestation and forest burning and (b) mining of indigenous lands on (i) climate and environment and (ii) indigenous peoples in Brazil.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Department: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We continue to be concerned by the rising rates of deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon. We have a long-established partnership with Brazil, supported by over £200 million of UK Climate Finance which aims to: i) improve the capacity of governments to reduce deforestation; ii) incentivise forest protection through results-based payments that are re-invested to

protect forests, and boost livelihoods; iii) enable businesses and communities to grow rural economies sustainably whilst protecting forests. Implementation arrangements for HMG-funded programmes regularly assess deforestation levels as well as their underlying drivers. The UK stands ready to support Brazil's efforts to counter increasing deforestation rates. We welcome the recent reduction of approximately 25% in areas under deforestation alerts in Brazil, driven particularly by state level action.

The Foreign Secretary and Secretary of State for International Trade have spoken to Brazilian counterparts about a range of issues, and raised with them the crucial importance of combating illegal deforestation at the UK-Brazil Strategic Dialogue (October 2020), and Joint Economic and Trade Committee (November 2020). We regularly discuss issues affecting indigenous peoples with the Brazilian authorities, and will continue to do so. The UK continues to support work with indigenous communities across Brazil, including in the Amazon region. In Brazil, UK programmes on building back better after the COVID-19 pandemic include a focus on vulnerable groups, and in the Amazon region, work on issues such as solar energy, primary health, and skills development.

HC Deb 13 April 2021 | PQ 175693

[Latin America: Rainforests](#)

Asked by: West, Catherine

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with Latin American counterparts on the protection of tropical rainforests; and what support the Government has provided for the protection of those rainforests.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Department: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is committed to encouraging and contributing to international action to address the problem of deforestation and the protection of tropical rainforests in Latin America. We believe that environmental issues can be addressed most effectively through leadership and action taken in the region, supported by international partners. Environmental issues are a regular part of our dialogue with countries in Latin America, for example through the Partnership for Sustainable Growth with Colombia and the High-Level Strategic Dialogue with Brazil, and most recently when the Foreign Secretary spoke to the Brazilian Foreign Minister in January.

Through the UK's International Climate Finance (ICF) we run major programmes on sustainable agriculture, tackling deforestation and improving livelihoods. To date the UK has committed approximately £259 million to Brazil and around £244 million to Colombia in International Climate Finance.

HC Deb 22 March 2021 | PQ 169931

Engagements

Asked by: Chris Grayling

I know that the Prime Minister shares my commitment to conservation around the world, and I am sure he agrees that we have to reverse the tide of deforestation. Will he ask Ministers in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to look seriously at my proposals for a kitemark scheme for food products in the UK, so that consumers can see clearly whether the products they buy come from sustainable sources or from producers who are doing further damage to our environment?

Answered by: The Prime Minister

I am very happy to look at my right hon. Friend's interesting suggestion for a kitemark scheme. In the meantime, this Government are leading the world in tackling deforestation, with a £3 billion investment being led across Whitehall.

HC Deb 10 March 2021 | Vol 690 cc863-978

Forests: Brazil

Asked by: Greenwood, Margaret

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with supermarkets and other high street retailers that sell products associated with (a) legal and (b) illegal deforestation in the Cerrado region of Brazil on their role in combating the climate emergency.

Answering member: Rebecca Pow | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Over the past year, Defra Ministers and senior officials have had numerous discussions with supermarkets and other high street retailers regarding sustainable supply chains and products associated with both legal and illegal deforestation. This included, in November 2020, a ministerial roundtable with industry stakeholders to discuss due diligence legislation for forest risk commodities, and the launch event of the Government's response to the Global Resource Initiative's (GRI) recommendations.

The GRI taskforce was established by the Government in 2019 to bring together representatives from industry and civil society to recommend actions to reduce the climate and environmental impacts of UK supply chains. The GRI published its report in March 2020 and the Government outlined its response in November 2020. This response included introducing world-

leading due diligence legislation for forest risk commodities and working, as co-Presidents of COP26, to forge a new alliance between governments to ensure global supply chains are sustainable. The UK Government will continue working with industry, the GRI taskforce, and other governments to tackle deforestation in the Cerrado and around the world.

HC Deb 27 January 2021 | PQ 142002

[Soya Beans: Brazil](#)

Asked by: Greenwood, Margaret

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of UK companies importing soya from the Cerrado region in Brazil of local legislation that permits deforestation of up to 80 per cent on (a) biodiversity, (b) South American river systems and (c) the human rights of indigenous communities.

Answering member: Rebecca Pow | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The UK Government recognises the current challenge of deforestation in the Cerrado for the production of agricultural products such as soya. The Cerrado is a critical biome and home to 5% of the planet's animal and plant species and 30% of Brazil's biodiversity. The effect of deforestation on biodiversity, South American river systems, and the human rights of indigenous communities in the Cerrado is significant.

We are committed to tackling deforestation and its social and environmental consequences across our global supply chains, including in the Cerrado. 27% of the soya imported into the UK is sourced in Brazil. Much of this is produced in the Amazon Soy Moratorium region, which is considered to have some of the strictest forest protections in the world. The Government has not made an explicit assessment of UK soy imports from the Cerrado on biodiversity, rivers, and indigenous people's rights, but continues to work closely with the UK Roundtable on Sustainable Soya, which it convened in 2018, to ensure the legality and sustainability of imported soya. The problem of deforestation in areas such as the Cerrado can only be comprehensively addressed through international action. That is why, as co-Presidents of COP26, we are working to forge a new alliance between producer and consumer governments to ensure global supply chains are sustainable.

HC Deb 27 January 2021 | PQ 142001

[Brazil: Imports](#)

Asked by: Gill, Preet Kaur

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for International Trade on protecting forests in Brazil's Amazon basin by banning UK imports of produce grown on illegally-deforested land.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Department: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is committed to encouraging and contributing to international action to address the problem of deforestation in the Amazon region. We believe environmental issues can be addressed most effectively through leadership and action taken in Brazil, supported by international partners. The UK has committed £259 million in International Climate Finance to programmes on sustainable agriculture, avoiding deforestation, and improving livelihoods in Brazil.

The Foreign Secretary and Secretary of State for International Trade have spoken about a range of issues. They raised the crucial importance of combating illegal deforestation with their counterparts at the UK-Brazil Strategic Dialogue, and Joint Economic and Trade Committee.

HC Deb 21 January 2021 | PQ 139092

[Brazil Trade Agreement: Environmental Standards](#)

Asked by: Kerry McCarthy

What discussions she has had with her Brazilian counterpart on enhancing environmental standards as part of a bilateral trade agreement.

Answering member: The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Trade (Mr Ranil Jayawardena) | Department: International Trade

Britain will not sacrifice her high standards of environmental protection in any future free trade agreements. At present, we do not have a trade agreement with Brazil, but we are clear that more trade does not need to come at the expense of our values. The Secretary of State and I raised the pressing issue of deforestation most recently on 11 November at our joint economic and trade committee with Brazil.

Asked by: Kerry McCarthy

I thank the Minister for his response, but in recent correspondence I have had with the Brazilian ambassador, he has refused even to acknowledge that deforestation is an issue in the Amazon. We have also seen recent reports in the press about terrible working conditions on Brazilian beef farms, which

have been described as akin to modern slavery. What more can be done to ensure not only that these concerns are raised in discussions with Brazil but that any future bilateral trade deal is conditional on Brazil taking action to stop the abuse of workers and the deforestation?

Answering member: Mr Jayawardena | Department: International Trade

The hon. Lady is right: there is, of course, more that can be done, which is why the United Kingdom has already committed £259 million to Brazil through its international climate finance programme to tackle deforestation. For example, the early movers programme rewards pioneers in forest conservation, and another programme led by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has protected the clearance of something like 430,000 acres in Brazil.

HC Deb 14 January 2021 | Vol 687 c471

[Soya Beans: Forests](#)

Asked by: Saville Roberts, Liz

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterparts across the globe on the impact of soy production on deforestation.

Answering member: James Duddridge | Department: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

A due diligence obligation set out in the Environment Bill will make it illegal for UK businesses to use agricultural commodities if they have not been produced in line with local laws protecting forests. This will help to ensure that UK imports of soya come from sustainable sources, and the Government is working to encourage other major markets to take a similar position.

As President of the COP26 climate change conference, the UK is also working to establish a new partnership between consumer and producer countries of agricultural commodities. The partnership will promote collaboration between governments and accelerate action to stop deforestation caused by agricultural commodities, including soya, and encourage trade in commodities that have been grown sustainably.

This political engagement complements UK International Climate Finance for forest protection and sustainable agriculture in key regions, including soya-producing regions of Brazil.

HC Deb 11 January 2021 | PQ 133095

[Trade Agreements: Amazonia](#)

Asked by: Siddiq, Tulip

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department is taking to prevent the import of goods sourced from illegal deforestation in the Amazon in future trade deals.

Answering member: Mr Ranil Jayawardena | Department: Department for International Trade

Britain is committed to upholding her high environmental standards, including through environmental provisions within Free Trade Agreements.

HM Government continues to raise its concerns regarding deforestation regularly with international partners, and the importance of sustainable and resilient economies, most recently at the United Kingdom-Brazil Joint Economic and Trade Committee on 11th November.

We have committed over £250m through International Climate Finance programmes aimed at tackling deforestation in Brazil – including through our Partnerships for Forests programme, which supports environmentally-friendly farming and replanting projects in the Amazon – and we are introducing new legislation that requires large British companies to make sure forest risk commodities in their supply chains are sourced legally in producer countries.

HC Deb 15 December 2020 | PQ 126085

[Brazil: Rainforests](#)

Asked by: Sobel, Alex

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help ensure the protection of the Amazon rainforest from increased illegal deforestation; and what plans he has to prevent UK businesses from using products sourced from illegally deforested land.

Answering member: Rebecca Pow | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The UK has worked in partnership with Brazil for many years to combat deforestation. Through the UK's International Climate Finance we have funded £259 million of programmes (2012 – 2020) to support sustainable agriculture, and increase the value of standing forests, and restore degraded lands, working with multiple stakeholders in the country. As part of this, the UK recently announced an extension of £16 million to the Partnerships for Forests programme, which supports environmentally-friendly farming and replanting projects in the Amazon, taking its total investment in protecting tropical forests in Latin America to £80 million this financial year.

We are also taking action at home. In 2019 the Government established the Global Resource Initiative taskforce to recommend actions to reduce the climate and environment impacts of key UK supply chains. Today we published our response to their recommendations by setting out a package of measures that we will take forward. One of the key measures announced is that the Government will proceed with a world-leading new ‘due diligence’ law to tackle illegal deforestation, and tabled an amendment to the Environment Bill yesterday. This new law will prohibit larger businesses from using forest risk commodities that were not produced in accordance with relevant local laws. These companies would need to undertake due diligence, and publish information about this exercise, to ensure this is the case. Businesses that do not comply with the new requirements would be subject to fines.

HC Deb 11 November 2020 | PQ 91925

[South America: Climate Change](#)

Asked by: West, Catherine

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what additional steps the Government is taking to work with partners in south America to help protect the Amazon rainforest and work together on climate change.

Answering member: James Duddridge | Department: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is engaging with international partners to ensure momentum and ambitious, collective action on climate ahead of a rescheduled COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021. As part of the UK’s COP26 Presidency we are working with Chile, the current COP Presidency, to call on all countries to submit new Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that represent their highest possible climate ambition. Tackling climate change remains a high priority for this Government. The Prime Minister has committed to double the UK’s International Climate Finance funding to at least £11.6 billion between 2021/22 and 2025/26. In South America, the UK is one of the leading donors of climate finance. The UK runs major programmes on sustainable agriculture and deforestation with stakeholders in Brazil, Colombia, and Peru, and has committed £120 million to Partnerships for Forests, a programme which supports sustainable businesses which create jobs and protect forests. This programme operates in a number of locations, including the Amazon region.

The Foreign Secretary recently raised the issue of climate change and the need to protect the Amazon rainforest with his Brazilian counterpart. We are keen to work with our South American partners to protect natural systems, like rainforest, which are on the front-line of the fight against climate change, and on the transition to sustainable land use, which is critical to raising the

next 1.5 billion people globally from poverty. It is vital to ensure that our land-use, agriculture and fisheries management policies adapt so that our ecosystems can continue to support people and biodiversity. To this end, the UK has been working with a number of countries to create an ambitious 'Leaders' Pledge for Nature'. This Pledge commits leaders to take ten urgent actions to put biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030. So far, 78 countries have signed the Pledge, including Bolivia, Colombia, Paraguay, and Peru.

In August 2020, the Government launched a consultation seeking views on whether it should introduce a requirement on larger business using forest risk commodities to undertake due diligence on their supply chains. The consultation attracted over 60,000 responses, which we are analysing carefully. We will publish the Government's response to the consultation shortly.

HC Deb 02 November 2020 | PQ 107070

[Amazon Rain Forest](#)

Asked by: Chris Elmore (Ogmore) (Lab)

What recent representations he has made to his Brazilian counterpart on climate change and protection of the Amazon rainforest.

Answering member: The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Wendy Morton) | Department: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

On 7 October, the Foreign Secretary held a strategic dialogue with his Brazilian counterpart which covered a number of topics of mutual interest, including trade, security and human rights. The Foreign Secretary raised the issue of climate change and the need to protect the Amazon from further deforestation. We run major programmes on sustainable agriculture and deforestation with various stakeholders in Brazil that totalled £259 million between 2012 and 2020. Climate change is one of the most important global issues, and international co-operation is vital to tackling it. As COP26 president, the UK will continue to work in partnership with Brazil on this important issue.

Asked by: Chris Elmore

Some 58.4% of the Amazon rain forest sits within Brazilian borders. I am glad that the Foreign Secretary is raising the issue of climate change, but it is not one of the greatest issues facing the world; it is the biggest issue facing the world. Coronavirus is bad, but the longer-term problems of climate change could consume various countries around the world through flooding or deforestation. With COP26 now moved to next year, will the Minister make far more robust representations—not just to the Brazilian Government, but to

many South American Governments—about the prioritisation of stopping illegal logging and the process of deforestation?

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Department: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

As I said in my previous answer, the Foreign Secretary had a strategic dialogue with his Brazilian counterpart, and both countries have affirmed that they will work to ensure that the COP delivers substantial negotiated outcomes in the fight against climate change. We believe that climate change is one of the most important global issues, and will be working not just with Brazil but with other countries to tackle this important issue.

HC Deb 13 October 2020 | Vol 682 c147

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