

# DEPARTMENT FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS: 2030 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE AND NATURE ACTION



Response from Humanist Climate Action, April  
2022

## ABOUT HUMANIST CLIMATE ACTION

Humanist Climate Action is a volunteer-led network of Humanists UK members and supporters committed to redefining lifestyles and campaigning for policies that promote low-carbon, ethical, and sustainable living in the light of the degeneration of the Earth's climate and biodiversity. We bring humanists together to facilitate individual and collective action on these issues. Humanists are guided by reason and science and recognise a moral duty towards the welfare of our fellow beings and the natural world. Humanists seek to engage in dialogue and debate rationally, intelligently, and with evidence, and promote the belief that humans are part of a wider natural world which must be treated sustainably for the sake of current and future generations.

## ABOUT HUMANISTS UK

At Humanists UK, we want a tolerant world where rational thinking and kindness prevail. We work to support lasting change for a better society, championing ideas for the one life we have. Our work helps people be happier and more fulfilled, and by bringing non-religious people together we help them develop their own views and an understanding of the world around them. Founded in 1896, we are trusted to promote humanism by 100,000 members and supporters and over 100 members of the All-Party Parliamentary Humanist Group.

## RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

### Question 1 of 5

When answering these questions, we would like you to consider:

1. The UK's position in relation to other countries (e.g. strategic advantage deriving from bilateral and multilateral relationships, economic and trade position, UK's soft power, our leadership position in climate negotiations, and [Official Development Assistance](#) (ODA) and non-ODA investments).
2. The wider environmental, societal and economic impacts of climate and nature action (e.g. impacts on the economy, trade-offs between climate and nature action).
3. That the [Integrated Review](#) sets out HMG's overarching geographical priorities and that by 2030 we will be deeply engaged in the Indo-Pacific, active in Africa, particularly East Africa and with important partners such as Nigeria, and that we will have thriving relationships in the Middle East and the Gulf based on trade, green innovation and science and technology collaboration.



Please note we are not seeking views on domestic interventions in the UK.

**1. Relative to other nations or international organisations, what do you consider are the most impactful and strategic interventions that the UK Government can take for climate change mitigation internationally?**

The UK Government should promote the protection and encourage the expansion of carbon sinks, including (but not limited to) rainforests, mangroves, peatland, permafrost, and the ocean. In particular this means stopping deforestation and replanting trees, protecting peatland and permafrost from pollution and agricultural demands, and ending plastic pollution in the ocean which slows the rate at which phytoplankton can absorb carbon dioxide.

Where appropriate, development aid should prioritise clean and green technologies such as renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure.

Global demand for meat products is at an all-time high which in turn puts more pressure on the climate. Where appropriate the UK Government should promote reducing meat and dairy consumption in diets around the world, and enable sustainable shifts of agricultural systems to reflect this.

**2. Relative to other nations or international organisations, what do you consider are the most impactful and strategic interventions that the UK Government can take to support international climate change adaptation action?**

The global community must acknowledge that the frequency of extreme weather events will increase as climate change progresses, and we must prepare infrastructure and communities to face this. Where development aid includes support for infrastructure projects, adaptation to the possible future conditions of the local environment should always be considered.

As much of the global food system is reliant on predictable weather patterns, there should be substantial investment and research into resilient crops – this should include diversification of varieties and food sources and the sharing of technologies with other countries.

As weather conditions change we may see a shift in the proliferation and transmission of various diseases such as malaria and dengue fever. The UK Government should look to pre-emptively tackle this by collaborating with other countries to invest in global vaccination programmes and anti-mosquito technology.

As parts of the world become less hospitable to human life, the UK Government should work internationally to recognise a new category of refugee – the climate refugee. Climate change will require extensive global cooperation to prevent humanitarian crises and a just transition to the new global conditions – places that have contributed very little in terms of emissions may become



inhospitable first and it should be the responsibility of countries that have contributed more emissions to assist with adaptation, which may include taking in climate refugees.

Where appropriate, priority should be given to methods and schemes that may help mitigate further climate change whilst also enabling adaptation. For example, replanting mangrove forests can help to reduce flooding and damage to coastal communities while also increasing carbon dioxide absorption.

**3. Relative to other nations or international organisations, what do you consider are the most impactful interventions the UK Government can take to halt biodiversity loss internationally?**

Marine biodiversity is a particular area in which international cooperation is extremely important as much of the world's oceans are outside national jurisdictions. The UK Government should support the creation of an international, legally-binding instrument that protects a global network of 'ocean sanctuaries' from human exploitation. Additionally, the UK Government should publicly oppose whaling and attempts to undermine the whaling ban, including so-called 'sustainable whaling', and encourage the strengthening of protections for cetaceans. A binding international agreement on ending the overfishing of endangered species and further work to compel fishing industries to recover and retrieve lost fishing gear would also help to stabilise marine life populations.

The UK Government should use international diplomacy to encourage the protection of forests including through internationally binding agreements, aid incentives, and sanctions. This should include always working with indigenous communities and preventing human rights abuses which can be caused by commercial exploitation.

**4. What are the most important interventions the UK Government can take to deliver co-benefits for climate, nature and people? And which are the trade-offs to consider?**

Not answered.

**5. Do you have any evidence regarding particular regions or countries we should be focusing on, both in the immediate and long term, given expected trends?**

Not answered.

**For more details, information, and evidence, contact Humanist Climate Action:**

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