

REMARKS

Thank you.

Bonjour à tous

It's great to hear from my fellow speakers.

We have true *champions* for the Congo Basin here today.

A huge thanks to *everyone* who has given us such a warm welcome to your beautiful country – and to you Lee, for showing me some of the amazing work that's underway in Gabon

...from using geospatial tech to give donors the confidence they need back wonders like Lope National Park, protecting everything from forest elephants to okapi

...to making sure communities feel *more* of the benefits of sustainable forestry, by turning timber into furniture *before* it leaves the country.

These are the sort of *practical* solutions we need to scale up.

And that's what the Congo Basin Forests Partnership is all about.

Yesterday, I co-chaired a ministerial meeting alongside Minister *Ndongo*

...for the first time since we came together at the COMIFAC pavilion in *Glasgow*, to reflect on the progress we'd made at the COP26 World Leaders' Summit a few days before.

It had been a long time coming – and it felt like a real *celebration*.

Over 140 countries representing over 90% of the world's forests – including many of *you* – had committed to work *together* to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation, by 2030.

Public, private, and philanthropic donors stepped up with *unprecedented* investment amounting to nearly *\$20bn*.

We secured an initial *\$1.7bn* to help indigenous peoples and local communities advance their *tenure* rights – that could not be more important.

The Glasgow Declaration is *reinforced* by commitments from the world's biggest buyers of forest-risk commodities, financial institutions, and the big multilateral development banks

...that will see *trillions* of dollars aligned with the Paris climate goals and the recovery of nature.

And \$1bn was committed through LEAF – a *high integrity* carbon market that will help us do *more*.

And as well as bringing nature from the margins of global *climate* conversation into the heart of our *response* for the first time – and, I think, for *good*

...what made COP26 so important and so *different*, was that that the Congo Basin was centre stage, on the world stage

...and we heard directly from *you*.

You helped the whole world understand the *critical* importance of your forests and peatlands for the people of the Congo *Basin*, for the entire African *continent*, and for our *shared* future.

You gave us a glimpse into how you're *protecting* your national treasures.

I've had the privilege of seeing some of that inspiring work for *myself*, on *both* sides of the mighty river, as well as in here in Gabon.

And in recognition of your calls for greater *support*

...we secured at least *\$1.5bn* for countries in the region over the next five years.

We're committed to working *together* to ensure the people of the Congo Basin have access to the resilient *livelihoods* that we *know* these magnificent forests and peatlands can *sustain*

... guided by the vision that Central African countries have set out.

And while these are *extraordinarily* challenging times to be bringing that vision to *life*

...as the impacts of climate change, covid, and conflict are being felt very deeply across the region

...we *must* ensure that the commitments made in Glasgow are honoured *in full* and that they are turning into effective *action*.

That's immensely important, in and of itself.

And it's fundamental to building the *trust* we need to work *together* and to get the whole of *society* on board.

So it has been enormously encouraging to hear the determination here in Central Africa to make that happen.

For our part, the *UK* will be co-chairing the Congo Basin Forests Partnership *donor* college alongside the USA

...as we give the COP26 pledge a *permanent* home at the CBFP.

And having committed to investing nearly a third of UK International Climate Finance – which we recently doubled – into nature, at least half of *that* in forests

...we're forging ahead with the work that our *£200m* commitment to the Congo Basin pledge will *support*

...through the brilliant Forests, Governance, Markets, and Climate Programme, our newly-established transboundary Biodiverse Landscapes Fund, and a new bilateral programme that we're designing ahead of COP27

...alongside our *£32m* contribution to *CAFI*.

We know *CAFI* needs to *change* – and we're committed to that as well.

Lastly, we need to make the *most* of pre-COP in DRC and COP7 in Sharm El Sheik later this year

...by sharing our progress *so far*, and plans for what comes *next*.

And if we can do *that* – we'll be in an even *better* position to ensure the Congo Basin feels the benefit of making *Montreal* the Paris moment for *nature* we need to catalyse a whole *decade* of action as well.

It's going to take all of us working together – across governments, across sectors, and across society – to see this through.

But we've got *two decades* of collaboration through the CBFP to *build* on.

And Libreville has renewed my hope that we've got what it takes to make that *count* in the weeks and months ahead.

Thank you.

[ENDS].

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