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Cassie Dummett

Our ref: TO2026/16950

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Dear Cassie,

Thank you for your letter of 28 July about the government's approach to deforestation regulations. We have been asked to reply. We apologise for the delay in responding.

We recognise the urgency of taking action to ensure that UK consumption of forest risk commodities is not driving deforestation. As you note, the government recently set out its intended approach to tackling deforestation in UK supply chains. We recognise the need to provide businesses with greater certainty and to ensure that UK supply chains are not linked to illegal deforestation.

In June 2026, we announced that the EU Regulation on Deforestation-free Products (EUDR) will apply in Northern Ireland as part of arrangements which ensure Northern Ireland's unique access to the EU Single Market is maintained. We also announced that in Great Britain (GB), we will consult on plans for an approach that works alongside the EUDR, including under the Environment Act 2021 and the UK Timber Regulation 2013. In due course we intend to move towards a deforestation-free standard.

We agree that meaningful engagement will be critical to ensuring the success of the regime. Defra will continue to work closely with businesses, civil society organisations, producer countries as policy development progresses. We are committed to delivering a consultation process that is inclusive and informed by a broad range of perspectives. Defra officials recently met with the NGO Forest Coalition and are working with them to understand how best the consultation can be shared with a wide range of stakeholders. We welcome the Coalition's support in disseminating the consultation and value its views both during the consultation period and beyond through continued engagement and discussion.

We understand the importance of minimising unnecessary burdens for businesses operating across the UK Internal Market and the EU Single Market. Our aim is for the proposed policy in GB to operate alongside the EUDR, supporting due diligence practices that are as consistent as possible for businesses trading across these markets. We will welcome views from businesses, civil society and international partners through the upcoming consultation.

You also raise the relationship between deforestation, economic resilience and national security. The government is clear that nature loss, including the destruction of forests and other ecosystems, presents significant risks to prosperity and long-term environmental security. Addressing these challenges remains an important component of our wider approach to achieving economic growth while protecting and restoring nature.

Regarding the financial sector, the government recognises the role that finance can play in supporting sustainable supply chains and reducing environmental risks.

With regards to the review the government committed to in the 2023 Financial Services and Markets Act, HM Treasury will begin this review of the financial services regulatory framework on deforestation-linked finance once the first regulations under paragraph 1 of Schedule 17 of the Environment Act 2021 regulations are made. This will ensure any action is proportionate and aligned with the UK's domestic approach to deforestation in supply chains.

The government is committed to rooting out human rights, labour and environmental abuses from global supply chains. These abhorrent practices have no place in UK supply chains and our global economy.

As you are aware, in the Trade Strategy, the government launched its review into responsible business conduct, which considered the effectiveness of the UK's current approach and assessed the merits of alternative policy options to support responsible business practices.

As part of this work, we heard from a wide range of stakeholders across business, civil society, and affected communities.

The Review has now been completed. The government is considering its findings and will set out its position in due course.

You highlight the significant impact that deforestation can have on the rights, territories and livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples and local communities who depend on forests. The UK government will continue to use existing programmes and partnerships to support forest governance, traceability and sustainable supply chains.

Thank you for your letter. We will continue to engage with stakeholders, including the NGO Forest Coalition, as the policy develops and welcome your ongoing input and engagement.

Yours sincerely,

Ministerial Contact Unit