

UK Intervention UNGA Special Session on Biodiversity

- Today sees the conclusion of the Summit on the Millennium Development Goals. If we are to deliver on the promises we made on hunger, nutrition, health and environmental sustainability – we need to step up our efforts. We are, of course, living in straitened financial times, and an era of fiscal consolidation. But I am delighted to be able to say that the UK will meet its commitment to provide 0.7% of GNI in overseas development assistance from 2013.
- Natural resources underpin human development. We rely on them for the essentials of life – food, water, clean air and so on.
- And yet biodiversity is still too often seen primarily as an environmental issue – when we know that it's an economic one. If we get this wrong, then our growth will be curtailed; and we will face the financial consequences of environmental degradation. We cannot continue to behave as if biodiversity is an inexhaustible free good. Later this year the report on the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity, will provide us with helpful advice on how we can start to apply a economic value to biodiversity.
- At Nagoya we need to agree a new, achievable and measurable global framework for biodiversity targets; this needs to be ambitious, and it also needs to be deliverable. And we need to ensure that this framework is underpinned by the best scientific evidence. That is why we cannot delay the creation of a new, independent intergovernmental panel on biodiversity and ecosystem services. And, following this week's discussions in Montreal, we need an injection of political commitment and flexibility by all countries in order to secure a fair and transparent system for governing access to, and the fair and equitable benefit sharing, genetic resources.
- It is essential that biodiversity, climate change, food security and poverty reduction are tackled together. We will not succeed if we try to deal with them individually. This autumn the MDG Summit, Nagoya and Cancun provide us with a tremendous opportunity to address these interlinked challenges. Together, we must seize it. We simply cannot afford not to.