



**Department of the Environment  
and Climate Change**  
HM Government of Gibraltar

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Environment Ministers from the UK's Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies meet in Isle of Man**

Ministers and senior officials from UK Overseas Territories (OTs) and Crown Dependencies (CDs) will travel to the Isle of Man next week to discuss the future of the environment in their jurisdictions.

The third Council of Environment Ministers of UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies takes place in Douglas, on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> February.

The meeting is hosted jointly by Hon. Geoffrey Boot MHK, the Isle of Man's Minister for Environment, Food and Agriculture, and Professor John Cortés, Gibraltar's Minister for Education, Heritage, Environment, Energy and Climate Change and co-ordinated by the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum (UKOTCF), a non-governmental organisation.

The meetings were founded in Gibraltar in 2015 and continued in Alderney in 2017.

The agenda for the meeting focuses on sustainability in the terrestrial and marine environment, climate change, the impact of natural disasters on ecosystem services, environmental resilience and the Isle of Man's designation as the first entire nation UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

Delegates will also discuss a wide range of issues, including the opportunities resulting from, and challenges posed by, withdrawal of the UK from the European Union.

Minister Boot said: 'I look forward to welcoming to the Island fellow Ministers and senior figures from British OTs and CDs and from those as far afield as Bermuda, Montserrat, Tristan Da Cunha and Turks and Caicos Islands.

'As islands, the OTs and CDs face common environmental challenges and we will pool knowledge and experience as we discuss their impact on our population and our planet.

'We will discuss joint and collaborative working, and approaches to discussions with the UK Government, which will participate in the event on the second day.'

Dr Mike Pienkowski, Chairman of UKOTCF, commented: 'Ours is the only body solely concerned with conservation and environmentally sustainable use across UK OTs and CDs. We were honoured to have been asked again by CD and OT Governments to organise the meeting, as a result of these years of bringing conservation practitioners together.

'The Isle of Man is a special place, with a strong focus on environment and a thriving tourism industry, and convening in such a fantastic location should greatly stimulate our discussions.

'The UK and its family of territories should be proud of striving to fulfil their world responsibilities for protecting this uniquely important heritage.'

Ministers and representatives of OTs such as Anguilla, the Falkland Islands, Pitcairn and St Helena, who are unable to make the long journey to the Isle of Man in person, will join the meeting via Skype.

Following the formal business, Minister Boot will show delegates around the Isle of Man.

## **Ends**

### **For further information, please contact:**

Hon [Geoffrey Boot MHK](#), Minister for Environment, Food and Agriculture, Isle of Man – +44(0) 7624 381497

Dr [Mike Pienkowski](#), UKOTCF Chairman – +44(0) 777 8841 233

### **Invitation:**

Minister Boot and Professor Cortés will be available for interview between 3.30pm and 4pm on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February. Please advise DEFA communications partner [jo.overty@gov.im](mailto:jo.overty@gov.im) if you plan to attend and meet in the lobby of the Villa Marina.

A news release and photo will be issued after the event.

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### **Notes for newsdesks:**

UK OTs and CDs each have their own identity and governing structure, with no representation in the UK Parliament.

The relationships between each OT/CD and the UK differs, though the UK is generally responsible for defence and international relations, including international conventions.

OTs and CDs are home to a far greater concentration of endemic and endangered species than mainland Britain.

These include extensive fringing reefs (Turks & Caicos Islands - TCI) and unique species of coral (British Indian Ocean Territory), deep seamounts supporting uncountable amounts of marine life (Ascension, Pitcairn), unique marine ecosystems: maerl beds (Isle of Man, Channel Islands); Sargasso Sea (Bermuda); enormous seabird colonies (Anguilla, Falklands, South Georgia, TCI); forests representing some of the most fragile and threatened habitat types (British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, St Helena, TCI, Cayman); wetlands of international and local importance (Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas, Falklands, TCI, Bermuda); cave systems which add to our understanding of early human settlements and evolution of unique species (Anguilla, Gibraltar, Bermuda, TCI); species which are found nowhere else or ones which pass through on long journeys (hundreds of single island endemic invertebrates on St Helena and Montserrat, gannets and puffins colonies in the Channel Islands, albatrosses in the Southern Ocean, sea turtles, humpbacks and sei whales across Caribbean, Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans); well-managed fisheries sustaining life and local economies (Isle of Man, Tristan, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands); world-class research leading the way in climate science (British Antarctic Territory).