



HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
Ministry for Health & Environment
Joshua Hassan House
Secretary's Lane
Gibraltar

PRESS RELEASE

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Minister Cortes at Commons event

Minister for the Environment, Dr John Cortes, has returned to Gibraltar after attending an event at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Rooms in Westminster Hall, House of Commons, hosted by Andrew Rosindell MP and the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum. The event included a presentation on 'Safeguarding the Globally Important Wildlife of the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies' by Dr Mike Pienkowski, Honorary Chief Executive of the Forum.

Mr Rosindell, who opened the event just before setting off to attend the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association meeting in the Falklands, stressed the importance of the UK's Overseas Territories for biodiversity.

The event was attended by members of both Houses of Parliament, including Richard Benyon MP, Under-Secretary of State for the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and Baroness Hooper, President of the Friends of Gibraltar, as well as representatives from Overseas Territories and provided an opportunity for discussion of environmental issues of concern to the Territories.

End

Note to Editors:

About 90% of the globally important biodiversity for which the UK is responsible under international agreements and conventions occurs in its overseas territories, rather than in Great Britain and Northern Island. Whilst the United Kingdom itself supports few endemic species (those found nowhere else), UKOTs collectively support at least 24 endemic bird species, 100 reptiles and amphibians, 200 plants and 500 invertebrates. Special rare ecosystems include cloud forest, dry tropical forest, mangroves, the best remaining raised atoll in the Pacific, glaciated landscapes and other wetlands. The UKOTs mean that UK is the seventh most important coral reef nation in the world.