



HM Government of Gibraltar

Ministry of Health, the Environment,
Energy and Climate Change

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Territories' Environment Ministers chart a course for a sustainable future

Environment Ministers from the UK Overseas Territories (OTs) and Crown Dependencies (CDs) gathered together for the first time ever in Gibraltar's Garrison Library last week to consider the environmental challenges facing the Territories. Present were representatives from Gibraltar, British Virgin Islands, Isle of Man, Alderney, Turks and Caicos, Falkland Islands, Tristan da Cunha and Montserrat, with Cayman present though Skype and other territories involved electronically.

The session was opened by the Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo, who stressed the importance of good environmental governance, and chaired by Minister for the Environment and Climate Change Dr John Cortes

In agreeing unanimously that the overriding problem facing all our communities, and the world at large, is the consequence of climate change, the Ministers and other high level representatives discussed ways of pooling resources in order for the OTs and CDs to play a bigger role at an international level.

It was agreed that the Environment Ministers' 'syndicate' should enhance ways for Ministers to remain in contact in real time and should meet annually to drive the environmental agenda, not just within the UK Territories, but in the wider context of small states and islands. The issue of energy transition, with increasing use of renewable was a key priority, as was the need to include the economic value of the environment in financial planning.

It was also agreed to use electronic means to share information between environmental scientists and officials, allowing access to expert reports and assessments across territories. This will reduce the cost of expert advice and will pool resources, which will increase the sharing of experience and expertise. This initiative will be run from Gibraltar by the Department of the Environment and Climate Change.

Other initiatives for cooperation, action and greater participation at a global level, were also agreed and will roll out over the coming months, and will include a recommendation to increase the emphasis placed on the environment at the annual Joint Ministerial Council in London.



Close contact will continue, and the next meeting of OT and CD Environment Ministers is already scheduled to take place next year in Montserrat.