

Alok Sharma joins the South African Government for a ministerial roundtable

COP President Alok Sharma, visited South Africa from 19 to 21 June, on a visit to support momentum in the delivery of the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP), a unique long-term collaboration between South Africa, the UK, France, Germany, the US and the EU to support South Africa's decarbonisation efforts.

The commitment to mobilise \$8.5 billion over 3-5 years was announced at COP26 in Glasgow last November, to support South Africa in reaching its ambitious Nationally Determined Contribution targets, whilst also promoting employment and livelihoods.

During his visit, the COP President met members of the South African Cabinet for a ministerial roundtable to discuss the Just Energy Transition Partnership. He also met the Head of the Presidential Climate Finance Task Team, Daniel Mminele, to build momentum ahead of COP27 in Egypt later this year.

Ahead of his arrival, the COP President announced that the UK is providing a further R29 million (£1.5 million) in UK technical assistance from the UK's Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions programme, to support the South African Government in developing the policy and tools to accelerate transition.

During his time in South Africa, the COP President also travelled to Mpumalanga province to visit Eskom's Komati power station in Middelburg. He also met members of coal mining communities, to hear more about the importance of a just transition.

COP President Alok Sharma said:

At COP26 I pushed for global ambition on climate response and greater levels of finance to support developing economies. The Just Energy Transition Partnership to support South Africa's decarbonisation shows how these two goals can be simultaneously met.

I am grateful to members of the South African Cabinet for our in-depth discussions this week, detailing how we will work together to deliver on South Africa's climate targets, support those affected by the transition and attract high-quality investment into South Africa's low carbon future.

Alongside accelerating the decarbonisation of South Africa's economy, it is critical that we are investing in the next

generation of jobs – and providing the training to make these roles widely accessible. It was instructive to meet members of the coal mining communities and hear more about what a just energy transition means to them.

We are working together to build momentum towards a strong outcome ahead of COP27, as South Africa embarks on its transition to a low emission, climate resilient economy that benefits from the opportunities of green growth.

To coincide with the visit, the British High Commission in South Africa also released details of UK-South Africa partnerships to unlock the skills of the future.

The British High Commission has teamed up with the Department of Science and Innovation on a report on how to boost the country's skills base for a green hydrogen future. Hydrogen energy is a clean and sustainable alternative to coal. The report identifies the type of skills and training needed and how these can be delivered through South Africa's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) college system.

The UK also announced new R3.7 million (£190,000) funding for new skills development across South Africa for jobs in the fast-growing electric vehicle sector. The new support will fund research to ensure South African students are developing the mostly highly sought-after skills in the electric vehicle sector, as well as new online training content and support for lecturers.

British High Commissioner to South Africa, Antony Phillipson, said:

The UK is proud to be working with South Africa, France, Germany, the US, and the EU to deliver this ground-breaking transition plan.

This partnership is about supporting South Africa to achieve its own targets for decarbonisation over time, supporting a just transition and unlocking the significant investment opportunities created in a rapidly emerging low carbon global economy.

The UK is a long-standing partner in supporting South Africa's climate ambitions, having invested over R4.8 billion (£250 million) in International Climate Finance in South Africa between 2011 and 2021. In recent years, UK firms have been responsible for 50% of investment in the fast growing renewable energy sector.

This week we were delighted to announce even more UK-South Africa partnerships with new support for electric vehicle training, and research into green hydrogen skills – to ensure that South African workers and young people are the major beneficiaries of the country's transition to a greener future.

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