

Calling on all parts of society to increase climate ambition

Thank you for that introduction, John.

Very shortly after being appointed to my COP26 role, I visited the United Nations in New York to speak to Permanent Representatives alongside the Secretary General. And on this trip, one meeting struck a particular chord.

It was an informal discussion with Permanent Representatives from developing nations, and we were going round the table, with everyone explaining what climate change meant for their country.

And when we got to the representative from one of the small island developing states. She said quite simply 'Unless we tackle climate change urgently, I won't have a place to call home.'

Now for many people across the world, the situation is literally as stark as that.

And that is why we need to work with the greatest urgency to tackle climate change. And ultimately this will require a joint effort on the part of governments, businesses, investors, cities, and regions working in partnership.

To meet the goals of the Paris Agreement, we must decarbonise the global economy up to five times faster over the next 10 years than we have over the past 20 years.

And that is why I am calling on all parts of society to increase their ambition, and to focus efforts on five critical areas: restoring nature, adaptation and resilience, clean energy, clean transport, and finance.

Businesses realise that going green is not just the right thing to do, but it is also what their customers want, and increasingly what drives shareholder value.

Analysis suggests, and many of you will know this, that investments in renewables create more jobs than the equivalent in coal, oil, and gas. Over the past decade we know that the cost of solar power has fallen by 85% and that of wind power by almost 50%. Both are now cheaper than new coal and gas plants in two-thirds of countries.

And that is why the likes of ANZ, Commonwealth Bank, Westpac, and NAB – all major investors – have said they will stop investing in coal power.

Globally, finance is also turning to clean sectors.

Last month, for example, iron ore giant, Fortescue announced plans to build more than 235 gigawatts of renewable capacity.

Our green global future creates enormous opportunities for countries and companies.

And here in the United Kingdom we are seizing those opportunities.

We have developed the world's largest offshore wind sector, and we will accelerate that success with Prime Minister Boris Johnson's new plan for a green industrial revolution, which was announced last month, and this includes a commitment to quadruple our offshore wind capacity within a decade, supporting many thousands of jobs.

And in the UK, we've demonstrated that green growth is absolutely possible. Over the last 30 years, we've managed to grow our economy by 75%, and cut our emissions by 43%.

In our experience, setting targets provides investors with confidence and clarity. We were the first major economy to legislate for net-zero emissions by 2050.

And the momentum is now building behind similar targets around the world. Globally more than 120 countries have made carbon neutrality or net zero announcements. And this includes recent examples of targets from Japan, from South Korea, from China, and I urge all other countries to join them.

On 12th December the UK, the UN and France will co-host a summit, in partnership with Italy and Chile, to mark the five-year anniversary of the Paris Agreement.

And we are calling on leaders from across the world to use this moment to announce ambitious climate commitments.

On emissions reductions, on climate finance, and on adaptation.

And we need everyone to play their part. The Race to Zero campaign is a coalition of cities, regions, businesses, and investors which have committed, through science-based targets, to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 at the latest. They already collectively account for 50% of the world's economy, and 25% of its emissions.

And I would like to thank Australia's States and Territories which have all made commitments to reach net-zero by 2050. And I urge all of you who have not already done so to join the Race to Zero Campaign.

I also ask investors to sign up to disclose climate risk in line with the recommendations of the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures.

This will become mandatory in the UK by 2025 and we need investors around the world to join us.

The world we live in is changing. Growth is increasingly green. And by working together, we can bring about the change that we need, and ultimately help preserve our planet for future generations.

Thank you.