

# COP26 President at opening of June Momentum for Climate Change

COP26 President Alok Sharma spoke today (1 June 2020) at the opening ceremony of the [June Momentum for Climate Change](#), a series of online events hosted by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

UN Deputy Secretary General Amina J. Mohammed, UNFCCC Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa, COP25 President Minister Carolina Schmidt, and [Subsidiary Body](#) Chairs Marianne Karlsen and Tosi Mpanu Mpanu were also part of the panel for the online event.

Well, Melinda thank you very much for that and thank you for channelling Winston Churchill in your introductory remarks.

Firstly, let me just thank our presiding officers Marianne Karlsen and of course Ambassador Tosi Mpanu-Mpanu for convening this June Momentum for Climate Change as well as of course Patricia and the UNFCCC Secretariat for all their work in making this happen.

You're absolutely right, I do have two hats that I come to, they're actually I don't believe mutually exclusive at all, they're indeed complimentary. But, right now, the immediate focus of course has been on fighting the coronavirus pandemic in terms of the economic support that we're providing to businesses to safeguard jobs, so not just lives but also livelihoods across our country and I do believe the package of measures the UK has put in place are substantial and on an international level favourable.

But of course every country right now will be focused on this, but I think as many colleagues have already said is that what we mustn't do is of course lose sight of the huge challenges of climate change itself.

And I'm positive about us coming out of this with a green recovery, I mean what we've shown in the UK is that we've managed to grow our economy, our GDP, by 75% between 1990 and 2018 and at the same time we've managed to cut emissions by 43%, so I sincerely believe it's absolutely possible to have green growth in our economies across the world.

And of course, how we rebuild our economies is going to have a really profound impact, in terms of our society's future sustainability, in terms of our resilience, indeed the wellbeing of individuals across the globe and COP26 can actually be that moment when the world unites behind a green and I think – really importantly – a fair recovery.

As you know we've now got new dates agreed for COP26. I want to thank all colleagues we've taken part in coming to that particular agreement and of course we're working on an ambitious roadmap with partners in the lead up to November 2021.

I'm absolutely committed in keeping the dialogue going, I think it's great that we're continuing to hold these events and I will stop at that point, I'll have a chance in a few minutes to set out our ambitions on the road to COP26 but thank you so much for holding this event, it's so vital as we move forward

Thank you very much for that and it's good to see Selwin is also channelling Winston Churchill and I'm looking forward to the next time we meet to come with my own inspiring quote from Winston Churchill.

Look, as I said, I want to thank all our colleagues: the COP Bureau, our Italian Partners, and everyone who's worked with us in arriving at the new dates for COP26. It gives us a very clear destination and I think that was always very important for us.

And of course, we all understand the extraordinary circumstances that we're in, as to why we've had to postpone COP26 but again I just want to echo the words of other colleagues here is that we're absolutely not postponing action on tackling climate change. Patricia, Selwin have made this point very eloquently and as indeed did Minister Carolina Schmidt and she repeated some of what she said at the Petersberg Dialogue, which is so important, where she made clear that the climate crisis hasn't taken time off but, and I think this is the positive piece, there is still time for us collectively to define the future.

And I can tell you as the incoming Presidency we're absolutely committed to working with all parties and stakeholders to accelerate climate action this year and of course in 2021 leading up to November.

And what we want ahead of COP26 is for all countries to be submitting these ambitious NDCs, committing to further cuts in carbon emissions by 2030. We want countries to set out those longer-term visions for emissions reductions, for ambitious long-term strategies, and actually to step up action to help the most vulnerable in society to adapt to the changing climate.

Developed countries absolutely have to meet and move beyond this totemic \$100bn per year climate finance goal. And of course we need to make progress in other areas as colleagues will know, there are five areas we are particularly focused on in relation to COP26: firstly, that transition to green energy; secondly, clean transport; thirdly, nature-based solutions which is so vital and allied with everything else we're doing; adaptation and resilience; and, of course, finance, which ties all of this together.

And we will seek to progress all the issues mandated for discussion within the UNFCCC process and let me give this commitment that I will be working very closely with our partners, Italy, with the Chilean COP25 Presidency and of course the future African Presidency of COP27, the UNFCCC and more broadly the UN family and indeed all Parties and stakeholders to accelerate this action on climate change we all want to see.

And I do want us to pursue a package that absolutely unleashes the full

potential of the Paris Agreement and powers the UNFCCC process forward. We're totally committed to delivering on a really ambitious, inclusive COP26 and we want to make sure that, actually, the voices who are most affected by climate change are also heard very, very loudly.

By the way we have managed to show that even in very difficult circumstances we can continue our cooperation as we're doing today. My team has been consulting with hundreds of parties or their representatives, as well as stakeholders around the world. Many of us have taken part in events, such as the Petersberg Dialogue, the Placencia Forum, and of course I think as Patricia said we've all come to appreciate 'lemons' but it's also worth pointing out that we hope that we can return to some, when we return to some semblance of normality we can also meet physically because that is absolutely vital as we continue our dialogue.

And in the crucial stretch of time leading up to COP26, we're going to work with all the Parties to make progress in the negotiations, including amongst others the 52nd meeting of the Subsidiary Bodies in October and of course the UN General Assembly annual meeting. And we do want to have a roadmap which we've been discussing with colleagues which sets out our ambitions to COP26. We're going to work through a whole range of multi-lateral and regional events, the G7, the G20 meetings, the World Bank annual meetings, and of course the CBD COP in China.

And we want to bring together not just countries, but also non-state actors and other stakeholders and we want to do this starting with the IEA Clean Energy Transitions Summit, which I very much hope to attend next month.

And we will use our position as incoming Presidency to convene parties at the highest levels to make progress at key moments between now and November next year.

So what I would say to you ladies and gentlemen, friends if I can call you that, which many of you already are, and I've said this before but it is absolutely the case that whether we live in the South, the North, the East or the West we do share this one, fragile, life-giving planet and of course we have a shared hope for a prosperous future.

Working together, I think we can make progress faster towards that clean, resilient recovery that we all want to see and I look forward to welcoming you to COP26 but also working with you very closely in terms of the drumbeat of action needed leading up to November next year. Thank you.

The June Momentum for Climate Change takes place from 1 to 10 June 2020 and offers an opportunity for Parties and other stakeholders to continue exchanging views and sharing information in order to maintain momentum in the UNFCCC process and to showcase how climate action is progressing under the special circumstances the world is currently facing.