

Corbyn calls for UK to stop passing the buck on climate change to poorer countries

Corbyn says UK contribution to climate crisis “even greater than we think” as he calls for UK to stop “passing the buck to poorer countries”

Speaking at Labour’s International Social Forum today (Sunday), Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn will announce that the next Labour government will act to stop the UK government hiding the country’s “true impact on our climate” by measuring the emissions created through our consumption as well as production.

Corbyn will explain that the way the UK only measures the emissions created through the production of goods and services in the UK, “hides our true impact on our climate” because “we don’t only contribute to climate breakdown with what we produce, we contribute with what we consume too.”

Over the past three decades, the UK has off-shored the production of manufactured and agricultural goods it consumes, along with the associated greenhouse gas emissions.

In 2016, emissions associated with imported goods made up 45 per cent of the UK’s overall consumption emissions. While the UK’s territorial emissions are falling, the UK’s consumption emissions have barely changed in the past two decades.

Corbyn will announce that the next Labour government will “show true international leadership” by making Britain the first major economy in the world to measure the emissions we import, as well as those we produce.

Labour will amend the Climate Change Act to instruct the Committee on Climate Change to include an assessment of our “total footprint emissions” in their annual report to Parliament, measuring our progress

against them and recommending policies to reduce them.

Announcing the policy, Jeremy Corbyn MP, Leader of the Labour Party, will say:

“The next Labour government will show true international leadership in tackling the climate crisis. We will face up to the climate emergency by recognising our real carbon footprint.

“Currently, when we measure a country’s emissions, we are talking about the greenhouse gasses generated as goods and services are produced in that country. But for a country like Britain, that measurement hides the country’s true impact on our climate because we don’t only contribute to climate breakdown with what we produce, we contribute with what we consume too.

“Over the last two decades the UK has reduced emissions – but it has done so in part by off-shoring those emissions. “That isn’t tackling global emissions – it is passing the buck to poorer countries.

“It’s time we were honest about our contribution to the climate crisis: it is even greater than we think. So under Labour, Britain will become the first major economy in the world to measure these consumption emissions and take action to reduce them.

“We shouldn’t see this as a burden. Offshoring our emissions isn’t just bad for the climate, it’s bad for UK industry.

“When we measure the emissions from goods produced in the UK but not those produced overseas, it puts industry here, especially energy-intensive industries like steel, at a disadvantage. So we will remove the perverse incentive to damage our own economy with no benefit to the climate.

“And we will send financial and technical support to the developing world, helping them adopt greener methods of production and reducing the carbon content of the goods we import.”