

The need to secure an outcome that delivers for each and every country and that delivers for our planet as a whole

- At virtual briefing on COP26 preparations, UK urges need to focus on reducing emissions, adaptation, finance flow and international cooperation
- UK stresses need for adaptive, creative planning in order to turn COP negotiations into climate action

Remarks by Rt. Hon. Alok Sharma, COP26 President-Designate, at the virtual briefing on updates to preparations for COP26

Thank you Ambassador, Excellencies, Secretary-General, friends. It is a real pleasure to speak to you all again to provide this regular update.

As you know, I'm now devoting all of my time and energies to the role of COP President-designate whilst continuing as a full member of the UK government cabinet. And I hope what this tells you is the seriousness with which Prime Minister Boris Johnson and indeed the whole of the UK government are taking our role as the incoming COP presidency.

And it recognises the stark facts in front of us – the facts, as the Secretary-General has just outlined, and the urgent need to use our collective ambition across all elements of the Paris Agreement.

2020 saw record temperatures. We saw fires raging across the world. We saw storms intensify. In short, my friends, the climate crisis is closing in.

But as the Secretary-General noted, we are seeing some acceleration in climate action despite the pandemic. And of course, at the Climate Ambition Summit that the UK held together with the United Nations and France in December, we heard from 75 world leaders who announced between them 45 nationally determined contributions, 24 net zero pledges and 20 adaptation commitments, with many of the countries most vulnerable to climate change leading the way. So I want to thank you, every one of you, who took part.

By the end of 2020 net zero was firmly established as the law. And if you take into account President Biden's recent announcements, over half of G20 countries and around 70 percent of global emissions are now covered by net zero targets. And I hope I speak for all of us when I say welcome back to the USA in our shared fight against climate change.

As I said at the Climate Ambition Summit, all this commitment is welcome, but it is not enough to meet the ambitions of the Paris Agreement – ambitions which we have collectively agreed. So let's be frank with ourselves. We still have some way to go. We are, as the Secretary-General said, way off target.

And we need to do more and we need to do it urgently.

So in my speech at the close of the summit, I outlined four goals that I want us to work towards to get the world on track to make Paris a reality. Today I want to say a little bit more about how we can do this.

First, we need to secure that step change in emissions reductions. We all know what we need to do here. This isn't new. This is about net zero targets with aligned NDCs that keep us 1.5 degrees within reach, and policies like phasing out coal power, as the Secretary-General said, to show that we are serious.

Secondly, we must strengthen adaptation. I really welcome the Secretary-General's leadership here. And, of course, the Climate Adaptation Summit, which was held by the Netherlands last month, where Prime Minister Boris Johnson also launched the new Adaptation Action Coalition. And as you will know, this has been developed by the UK and our friends in Egypt and Bangladesh and Malawi, the Netherlands, St Lucia and the UN, together with our Group of Friends on Adaptation and Resilience in New York.

The aim is to convert the political commitment generated through the call to action, which I was part of launching in 2019 at UNCA, into practical reality. And I urge all countries to join this coalition. Please sign the call to action if you have not already done so, and as well as to focus on effective adaptation planning and setting out progress in adaptation communications.

Our third goal, an absolutely vital one, is to get finance flowing – both public and private – particularly to developing countries and especially to adaptation.

My message could not be clearer. Progress on public finance has sadly been too slow – woefully slow, say our friends in countries on the front line of having to deal with climate change. My fellow donor countries need to step up and deliver the \$100 billion a year in international climate finance that we have promised. As I've said before, this is a matter of trust and we must deliver.

Last month, the UK COP presidency published our public finance priorities, and we want to work with all of you to make progress on these vital issues. And I'm also working to get both public and private finance moving.

To make further progress in this area, the UK's COP presidency will hold a Climate and Development Ministerial at the end of March, and we will bring together ministers representing donor countries and countries vulnerable to climate change to establish how we can remove barriers to climate action and development. Together, we will look at four vital issues: access to finance; quantity and predictability of finance; the response to impacts; and fiscal space and debt.

And we will plan to make progress on each of these areas through events like the G7, the IFI spring meetings and, of course, the UN General Assembly. And

discussions will be informed by experts and civil society groups, and we will be working with regional chairs to make sure all regions are represented. The event will also be open to observers from countries who are not directly participating.

The fourth and final goal is to enhance international collaboration around critical challenges in sectors to make progress faster. Our COP26 campaigns have established new forums like the Energy Transition Council and the Zero Emission Vehicle Transition Council, which met for the first time last year. We also have the Forest Agriculture and Commodity Trade Dialogues, which were launched publicly last week. And I have to say we have seen a real appetite for cooperation, so thank you to all of your countries and governments for taking part. And on all four of these goals, major economies must show leadership. And let me confirm to you that the UK will use its G7 presidency to urge them to do so, as, of course, will our Italian partners with their G20 presidency.

Of course, the multilateral negotiations are at the heart of our plans. They underpin each of the four goals that I've outlined and are absolutely key to fulfilling the Paris agreement.

So we must test solutions and prepare the ground ahead of COP26 so that we arrive in Glasgow ready to close a deal. Last year we did make progress virtually despite the pandemic. We had events like the UN Climate Change Dialogues and others.

This year cannot simply be a repeat of the last, as the Secretary-General has outlined. We may not be able to meet in person for some months, but we know that we need to make progress faster.

And so we need to see creative ways of conducting our discussions that have inclusivity at their very heart. And I am therefore consulting with the chairs of all the UNFCCC negotiating groups and meeting international partners to understand their positions.

As Ambassador Woodward pointed out, I recently visited Ethiopia and Gabon, and I will continue to travel where possible.

With our friends in Chile, we have initiated new monthly meetings, bringing together heads of delegation from every country to chart the course to Glasgow together and to find possible solutions to negotiating issues.

Friends, I have to say this: this is a joint endeavour, an endeavour between all of us together. So we are working with the UNFCCC to support parties' connectivity. We are holding meetings that respect different time zones and we are discussing how technology can help us move forward together.

We must continue to work creatively and flexibly, guided by the principles of transparency, inclusivity and common purpose to make progress, which is so vital. So that when we do meet in person in November we secure an outcome that delivers for each and every country and that delivers for our planet as a whole. And I look forward to working with all of you throughout 2021 to

achieve this.

We all know what is at stake if we do not work now to secure the right outcomes at Glasgow. Let me remind you, we have 266 days to go to COP26. Please, let's work together. Let's make sure that every one of those days count.

Thank you.

E-Seminar: Introduction to food allergen risk assessment

News story

This e-seminar will familiarise the viewer with the concepts of food allergen risk assessment and specifically with the risks from unintended allergen presence



The e-seminar, complied by Benjamin C Remington, PhD, will include the iFAAM (Integrated approaches to Food Allergen and Allergy Management) tiered risk assessment and the VITAL (Voluntary Incidental Trace Allergen Labelling) Program, both of which have been designed to assist food companies and regulatory bodies in the implementation of food allergen risk assessment procedures.

The e-seminar is intended for individuals currently working within the food allergen testing arena, the food industry and those involved with the UK official control system.

The production of this e-seminar was co-funded by the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Food Standards Agency, Food Standards Scotland and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, via the Government Chemist, under the Joint Knowledge Transfer Framework for Food Standards and Food Safety Analysis.

Hartlepool is latest to launch Project Servator

CNC Hartlepool has become the latest Operational Policing Unit (OPU) in the Civil Nuclear Constabulary (CNC) to launch Project Servator – an innovative and collaborative community approach to policing.

Project Servator will see highly visible yet unpredictable deployments of specially trained officers around the Hartlepool site and the surrounding local community. The operational deployments involve officers working together with our communities to report suspicious activity. These officers are deployed to disrupt hostile reconnaissance – the information-gathering terrorists and other criminals need to do to plan their activity – and provide reassurance to members of the public.

The CNC has been using Project Servator tactics for a number of years, after a pilot of the project was initially launched at Sellafield in 2016. The project is now rolling out across all other sites in the CNC.

Project Servator tactics are used by 23 UK police forces and New South Wales Police Force in Australia. They have been developed to enhance the effectiveness of our resources and not as a response to any change in threat.

Supt Donna Jones, who is the CNC lead for Project Servator, said: “A number of our officers have been specially trained in Project Servator tactics, which allow them to recognise the signs of people carrying out hostile reconnaissance or planning criminal activity.

“The main advantage of Project Servator however is that it allows us to connect with the communities around our sites. Those who live and work in an area know it better than anyone and notice anything out of the ordinary. Project Servator officers will now utilise the communities and businesses around our locations to hear about anything unusual that might be going on.”

“The deployments are unpredictable and we can turn up anywhere at any time. The aim is to work with our local communities to disrupt any hostile threat.

“Remember, together, we’ve got it covered – trust your instincts and report any suspicious activity directly to the CNC by calling 03303 138146.”

The CNC is the armed police force in charge of protecting civil nuclear sites and nuclear materials in England, Scotland and Wales. We employ over 1,500

highly trained police officers and police staff across the UK. Counter terrorism is a major part of our policing.

We have our own Twitter, Facebook and Instagram page, so keep up to date with recruitment information, Servator deployments or anything CNC by searching for us and giving us a follow. You can also find out about recruitment opportunities at our CNC Jobs website.

Government commits to 80,000 new SWAPs opportunities

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has today given a further boost to jobseekers by increasing the number of retraining places on the Sector-based Work Academy Programme (SWAP) to 80,000 for the next financial year – building on the 40,000 already successfully delivered over the last eight months.

SWAPs offer jobseekers across England and Scotland a six-week training programme, where they learn new skills, gain hands-on work experience and build their contacts in a new line of work. Whether it's from aviation to care, or finance to logistics, every SWAP participant is guaranteed an interview at the end of their course for a live job vacancy.

Already, the £30bn Plan for Jobs investment is helping people across Britain find new employment and upskill in key growth sectors – with the DWP on track to be able to help over 1.8 million people into work.

Work and Pensions Secretary Therese Coffey said:

More people are looking at ways to apply their skills in new industries and many are interested in retraining in sectors such as care. That's why we're increasing the number of SWAPs on offer – giving jobseekers a vital chance to get back on their feet, through our Plan for Jobs.

The Sector-based Work Academy Programme gave Grace Simpson from the West Midlands the skills and confidence she needed to move into work in care.

Grace said:

The most valuable thing about SWAPs was giving me the knowledge and experience that I needed to be able to work in the care sector.

With the Kickstart Scheme creating hundreds of thousands of new opportunities for young people, Job Finding Support offering 160,000 newly unemployed jobseekers online help, and the JETS Programme supporting a quarter of a million people to fire up their work search – the two million helped will include people of all ages and abilities.

Deputy CEO of the Recruitment & Employment Confederation, Kate Shoesmith, said:

The Plan for Jobs should be at the heart of the recovery – focussing on how to get people into work quickly is fundamental. REC is proud to be a Kickstart Gateway employer and why so many of our recruiters are providing places on the scheme.

Help with practical job finding tools, like CV writing and interview practice, is a great support to jobseekers. Recruiters do this every day – last year 1 million people found a new permanent job with the help of a recruiter. Employment businesses are ready to work with government and play their part as job experts in building back the labour market to full strength.

Other work to level up the country and build back better includes green jobs, apprenticeships and traineeships, as well as the bespoke support each and every Universal Credit claimant receives from Work Coaches located throughout the country.

To help spearhead efforts to get Brits back in work the DWP is continuing to hire an additional 13,500 new dedicated Work Coaches with 8,500 already in post, and later this year the new Restart Scheme will help over a million people out of work for more than a year.

The announcement comes as the vaccine continues to roll out across the country with millions already receiving the vital shot in the arm, and recent employment figures reporting an uptick in vacancies on the quarter.

For more information on Plan for Jobs, visit:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/plan-for-jobs>.

Further information

Scheme Estimated number of people supported --

Work Coaches 13,500 recruited by March

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 3267 5144

Follow DWP on:

Minister for the Constitution & Devolution: Local Elections

I am updating Parliament on the government's plans to proceed with the local elections on 6 May 2021 and the [statutory instruments](#) I am laying today on nominations.

Safe and secure elections are the cornerstone of our democracy. The government has long been clear that there should be a very high bar for delay, but it was responsible to keep the situation under review in order to take into account the views of the electoral community and of public health experts. Having considered these views, the government confirmed on Friday 5 February 2021 that the range of polls scheduled for 6 May 2021, including council and mayoral elections in England, and the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales, will go ahead as planned. It is important that we give this certainty to the electoral sector and political parties.

The government has also published a [Delivery Plan](#) setting out how the polls will be delivered in a COVID-19 secure and effective way. It sets out how these polls will proceed, from announcement to results, and then covers the four major areas that we are addressing: public health and social distancing; nominations and campaigning; voting; and the delivery of elections. The government is providing a package of measures to support statutorily independent Returning Officers to deliver these elections successfully and with the right precautions in place. Those measures include changes to proxy voting rules so that those affected by COVID-19 can still vote; and the provision of indemnity to Returning Officers for COVID-19 risks in respect of these elections.

There will be an estimated £92 million of government grant funding that will be provided to local authorities for the elections; of this, £31 million is an uplift to directly address costs associated with making the elections COVID-19 secure.

I am today providing further detail of the measures the government intends to take to change temporarily the nominations process, in light of the exceptional circumstances. For potential candidates standing for elected office in the council, mayoral and Police and Crime Commissioner elections, we are introducing measures to reduce the travel and contact involved in completing their nomination form.

The government has listened to the views of the electoral sector, candidates and political parties that the need to collect a high number of signatures for nomination as a candidate in some types of poll was encouraging an unhelpful and unnecessary amount of interaction, as well as complexity for candidates. While it is essential that candidates in a poll can demonstrate a

clear amount of local support, we must balance the importance of democracy with the need to protect people in these unique circumstances. In reaching a decision about the approach to nominations we have consulted with the Parliamentary Parties Panel and considered other cross-party representations.

These statutory instruments, one affirmative and one negative, will therefore make changes to the nomination process to reduce the number of signatures that candidates are required to collect for almost all types of poll due to be held on 6 May, including council elections, mayoral elections and Police and Crime Commissioner Elections. These provisions are time-limited; the elections next May (2022) will automatically revert to the standard rules.

I intend to publish further guidance for candidates, their agents and political parties later this month. The government will be engaging with Parliamentary Parties Panel on the new guidance and on campaigning provisions, to ensure the views of political parties are taken into account.

The associated documents have been placed in the Libraries of the House.