

UK Representative, COP26 President, Alok Sharma's Ceremonial Opening Speech at COP27

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to declare open the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Friends, let me begin by thanking our friends here in Egypt for such a warm welcome.

My team and I know just how demanding hosting such a conference is, and how many people have worked incredibly hard to get us to this point.

So congratulations, and thank you again.

Now as the UK Presidency comes to an end, I want to reflect on what we achieved together in Glasgow,

and also what has happened since in our Presidency year.

Last November, the world gathered at COP26 against a fractured and fractious geopolitics, as a once-in-a-century pandemic dragged mercilessly on.

And yet, leaders recognised that, despite their differences, often profound, cooperation on climate and nature is in our collective self-interest.

And thanks to that spirit of cooperation and compromise, we forged together the Glasgow Climate Pact.

Collectively we achieved something historic, and something hopeful.

With your help:

We closed the Paris Rulebook.

We made unprecedented progress on coal, and on fossil fuel subsidies.

We committed to rapidly scale up finance, and to double adaptation finance by 2025.

We reiterated the urgency of action and support for loss and damage, and established serious work on funding arrangements.

We hope that this will pave the way for a formal agenda item and tangible progress here in Egypt.

And every Party, and I repeat this, every Party agreed to revisit and strengthen their 2030 emissions reduction targets, to align with Paris.

I want to thank the 29 countries which have already updated their NDCs since Glasgow.

From Australia to Micronesia.

India to Vanuatu.

Norway to Gabon.

And we also made progress outside the negotiating rooms, with commitments from business, from finance, from philanthropy.

Friends, thanks to the work we did together, we achieved our objective, the goal at the heart of the Paris Agreement:

we kept 1.5 degrees alive.

Now, none of us could have anticipated the year that followed.

We have been buffeted by global headwinds that have tested our ability to make progress.

Putin's brutal and illegal war in Ukraine has precipitated multiple global crises: energy and food insecurity, inflationary pressures and spiralling debt.

These crises have compounded existing climate vulnerabilities, and the scarring effects of the pandemic.

And yet, despite this context, there has been some progress in implementing the commitments we delivered in Glasgow.

Over 90 percent of the global economy is now covered by a net zero target, up from less than 30 percent when the UK took on the COP26 role.

The biggest companies and financial institutions in the world have committed to net zero and they have done so in force,

with a global wall of capital creating green jobs, and directing billions into the green industries of both today and tomorrow.

Countries and companies are making tangible sectoral progress,

from Zero Emission Vehicles to our Breakthrough Agenda,

and are accelerating the rollout of renewable energy across the world.

The Secretary General has been clear: our shared long-term futures do not lie in fossil fuels and I agree with him wholeheartedly.

Every major report published this year underscores the point that progress is being made.

Thanks to the commitments we garnered ahead of and at COP26, and indeed in

our Presidency year, emissions in 2030 are expected to be around six gigatons lower.

That is the equivalent of 12 percent of today's global annual emissions.

And with full implementation of all the commitments in place today, including NDCs and net zero targets, the reports suggest that we are heading to 1.7 degrees warming by the end of the century.

Not 1.5.

But still, progress.

So, to those who remain sceptical about the multilateral process, and of the COP process in particular, my message is clear:

as unwieldy and sometimes as frustrating as these processes can be, the system is delivering.

And there are many people to thank for that.

And certainly too many to name.

The Prime Ministers and Presidents who have sensed the changing wind, and indeed sought instead to harness it.

The Ministers to the miners who have recognised a just and sustainable future can only be delivered with a clean energy transition.

The civil society organisations, youth representatives and indigenous peoples who pushed us to consider and reconsider what was possible in Glasgow, have continued to do so since.

And, of course, the brilliant officials, the brilliant civil servants around the world, not least in the UK's COP Unit, who have helped to deliver progress.

And yet, despite this progress, I fully recognise the scale of the challenge still in front of us.

Just as every report shows that we are making some progress, they are equally clear that there is so much more to be done in this critical decade.

Friends, we are not currently on a pathway that keeps 1.5 in reach.

And whilst I do understand that leaders around the world have faced competing priorities this year,

we must be clear,

as challenging as our current moment is, inaction is myopic, and can only defer climate catastrophe.

We must find the ability to focus on more than one thing at once.

How many more wake-up calls do world leaders actually need?

A third of Pakistan under water.

The worst flooding in Nigeria in a decade.

This year, the worst drought in 500 years in Europe, in a thousand years in the US, and the worst on record in China.

The cascading risks are also clear.

Entire economic sectors becoming unsustainable and uninsurable,

entire regions becoming unlivable,

and the strain on the global movement of goods,

and the pressure on people to relocate because of the climate crisis, becoming almost unimaginable.

So, this conference must be about concrete action.

And I hope that when the world leaders join us today, they will explain what their countries have achieved in the last year, and how they will go further.

It is very simply, a matter of trust.

Without its constituent members delivering on their commitments, and agreeing to go further, the entire system falters.

I will do everything in my power to support our Egyptian friends.

The UK is here to reach ambitious outcomes across the agenda, including on mitigation, on adaptation, and on loss and damage.

And we know that we have reached a point where finance makes or breaks the programme of work that we have ahead of us.

So whilst I would point to some of the progress shown on the \$100 billion,

I hear the criticisms, and I agree that more must be done, by governments and by the Multilateral Development Banks,

including on doubling adaptation finance by 2025, and establishing a post-2025 goal.

Ultimately though, I remain hopeful.

Look back to where we were before Glasgow.

Look back to where we were before Paris.

Indeed, as we mark the thirtieth anniversary, look back to where we were before Rio.

With thanks to all of you, the UK's Presidency ends as a demonstration that progress is possible, is happening and is continuing.

Yes, we need to accelerate that progress in the remainder of this decisive decade.

But I believe fundamentally that we can.

We know what we need to do to keep 1.5 degrees alive.

We know how to do it.

And Sameh, you and your team have our full support.

So now friends, let's make sure we delivery, let's make it happen.

Thank you.

[The UK's Presidency of COP26 ends as world leaders meet in Egypt for COP27](#)

World news story

One year on from hosting COP26 in Glasgow, the UK has handed over the Presidency of the United Nations Climate Change Conference to Egypt as world leaders, including the UK's PM, Rishi Sunak, meet at Sharm el Sheikh for COP27.



The UK's Presidency of COP26 made progress on each of its four goals of: mitigation (reducing emissions), adaptation (helping those already impacted by climate change), finance (enabling countries to deliver on their climate goals) and collaboration (working together to deliver even greater action). Most importantly, if countries which agreed the Glasgow Climate Pact deliver on their commitments to phase down coal power, halt or reverse deforestation and speed up the switch to electric vehicles, limiting global warming to 1.5

degrees is still possible. This will be critical for preventing devastating climate impacts and protecting vulnerable countries like Pakistan.

At COP26 the UK pledged £55m in financial support to Pakistan to assist with building climate resilience and tackling climate change. This support is in addition to £26.5m provided by the UK Government and £30m donated by UK citizens to provide relief following this year's devastating floods.

Having handed over the Presidency, the UK is maintaining its ambitious goals on climate change. This year the UK is launching the 'Accelerating to Zero Coalition' which will promote the use of more electric cars worldwide. The UK is also initiating the 'Forest and Climate Leaders' Partnership' to halt and reverse forest loss and will be working with developed countries to increase the availability of climate finance to countries such as Pakistan.

Development Director at the British High Commission, Islamabad Jo Moir, said the following:

This year's floods are a stark reminder of impact climate change is having on our lives. Globally, we will face more climate catastrophes, and climate-vulnerable countries like Pakistan face enormous challenges. Business as usual is not enough. At COP27 we need to make further progress on ensuring countries which have been affected by climate related disasters have the necessary tools to build-back smarter. The UK will be a leading voice on this.

Notes to editors:

1. Important achievements of COP26 include: International partners mobilising over \$20 billion for a just and inclusive transition from coal to clean energy. 137 countries committed to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 in the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use. The COP26 Declaration on Accelerating the Transition to 100% Zero Emission Cars and Vans brought together over 35 countries, 6 major carmakers, 43 cities, states and regions, 28 fleet owners and 15 financial institutions and investors, all committing to work together to achieve this goal. It currently has over 180 signatories. Building on the ZEV declaration, the UK will formally launch the Acceleration to Zero (A2Z) Coalition— this will comprise of a group of governments, manufacturers and businesses that will take the lead in ensuring that all new vehicles are zero emission by 2035 in leading markets and globally by 2040.
2. On 2 November, as part of its Climate Finance Accelerator programme the UK announced that seven low-carbon projects from across Pakistan would receive technical support to improve their ability to attract long-term investment from financiers, worth up to £148m. These projects have the potential to benefit communities across Pakistan, through clean energy access, green transportation and pollution reduction while creating

jobs. The ultimate objective however is to improve the flow of much needed climate finance which will allow Pakistan to build back smarter.

3. At COP27 the UK is launching the 'Forests and Climate Leaders' Partnership' FCLP– it is a core group of high ambition countries to accelerate global progress to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 while delivering sustainable development and promoting an inclusive rural transformation. The partnership will keep the forests and land use sector high on the political agenda and more strongly linked into global climate processes and actions. The FCLP ministers will meet every year on the side lines of COP meetings.

For updates on the British High Commission, please follow our social media channels:

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[Reversal of National Insurance](#) [Increase takes effect today](#)

News story

From today (6 November) the 1.25% point cut to National Insurance rates for employees and employers takes effect across the UK.



- The reversal of April's rise in National Insurance takes effect across

the UK from today

- Added to July's increase in National Insurance thresholds, almost 30 million people will be £500 better off on average next year
- Most employees will start to receive this tax cut directly through payroll between November and February

The tax cut was announced by the government on 22 September, as part of the reversal of the Health and Social Care Levy.

Working people across the UK will begin receiving the tax cut in their payslips this month, with all expected to have started receiving it by February.

The move to reverse April National Insurance increase follows the rise in National Insurance thresholds in July. As a result of both measures, working people will be £500 better off, on average, next year.

Funding for health and social care services will be maintained at the same level as if the levy were in place.

It takes effect in all parts of the UK and means working people will keep more of the money they earn.

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[Bank holiday proclaimed in honour of the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III](#)

Press release

Bank holiday proclaimed in honour of the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III



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The Prime Minister has decided to proclaim an additional bank holiday to mark the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III next year.

The bank holiday will fall on Monday 8 May, following the Coronation on Saturday 6 May.

In line with the bank holiday to mark Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation in 1953, this will be an opportunity for families and communities across the country to come together to celebrate.

The bank holiday will take place across the United Kingdom.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said:

"The Coronation of a new monarch is a unique moment for our country. In recognition of this historic occasion, I am pleased to announce an additional bank holiday for the whole United Kingdom next year."

"I look forward to seeing people come together to celebrate and pay tribute to King Charles III by taking part in local and national events across the country in his honour."

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Oliver Dowden said:

"The Coronation combines the sacred and the solemn but it is also celebratory."

"This bank holiday will once again give people across the United Kingdom the opportunity to come together as families and communities to welcome His Majesty to the throne as we mark this important day in our nation's long history."

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[North Korea ballistic missile test: FCDO spokesperson statement](#)

News story

A Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office spokesperson statement on North Korea's ballistic missile test on 5 November.



A Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office spokesperson said:

DPRK launching four short-range ballistic missiles on 5 November would be a clear violation of UN Security Council Resolutions.

As the G7 Foreign Ministers agreed this week, the DPRK must abandon its nuclear weapons, existing nuclear programs, and any other weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

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