

Alok Sharma, COP26 President, to visit South Africa to reinforce support for a just energy transition

- Mr Sharma will meet key stakeholders involved in the process of a clean and just energy transition and how the partnership will support their ambitious goals
- UK announces further £1.5m funding for new technical assistance and partnerships on supporting South Africa's just energy transition

COP President Alok Sharma will travel to South Africa this week (19-21 June) as work continues to support the implementation of the South Africa Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) announced at COP26 last year.

During his visit, the COP President will meet with South African government ministers, communities, business leaders and officials involved in delivering a just energy transition for South Africa – discussing the opportunities and challenges presented by such a transition, and how the partnership can support them to accelerate a move to renewable energy.

The South Africa Just Energy Transition Partnership is a long term political agreement between South Africa and an International Partner Group (IPG) of countries, comprising the UK, US, France, Germany, and the EU.

The country-led Partnership aims to accelerate the decarbonisation of South Africa's economy, with a focus on bolstering the electricity system and a move away from coal that will help the country achieve its ambitious goals set out in their Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).

On his first visit to the country, Mr Sharma will also meet with coal mining communities to hear about their perceptions of a just energy transition and emphasise the opportunities that green growth presents for job creation. He will also witness work to support a just transition in action at a coal-fired power plant soon to be decommissioned, observing the repurposing process underway there and promoting the importance of efforts which retain and create new jobs while shifting from coal.

While in South Africa, Mr. Sharma will meet with key ministers from across the South African government and representatives from the South Africa Presidential Climate Finance Task Team assigned to deliver the Just Energy Transition Partnership. The parties will jointly assess progress and agree the next steps to drive forward this innovative response in accelerating and financing a just energy transition.

Alok Sharma, COP26 President, said:

“A clean, just energy transition not only delivers enhanced climate action, it will help create new jobs, economic growth, clean air and a resilient, prosperous future.

“Providing financial support and technical partnerships is fundamental to support this transition in developing and emerging economies.

“The South African Just Energy Transition Partnership embodies the ambition we called for at COP26. This country-led approach puts fairness at the heart of the transition from coal to clean energy and will deliver high levels of finance and support to South Africa in achieving this ambitious transition.

“With less than six months before COP27, my visit is about demonstrating our continued support to South Africa to drive forward this commitment and build on key next steps.”

A further £1.5m of support will be provided to South Africa in 2022-2023 through the UK’s Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions (PACT) program, aimed at providing technical assistance to South African government stakeholders working on just transition sector job resilience, climate transition pathways for reaching net-zero in various economic sectors, and energy sector decarbonisation.

There is a huge global appetite for the strategic energy security that greater investment in renewables can bring. Work is ongoing with partners to assess the scope for similar partnerships in other nations with further announcements anticipated in advance of COP27.