

Alok Sharma delivers keynote speech at Global Witness 'Time for a Climate Revolution' event

Greetings to you all. It is a pleasure to join you today. And thank you to Global Witness for organising this event.

Friends, the window we have to avoid the worst effects of climate change is closing, and it is closing fast.

In 2015, the countries of the world signed the Paris Agreement, an international deal to tackle the climate crisis.

And in that Agreement they committed to limit global temperature rises to well below two degrees, aiming for 1.5 degrees.

Because the science says this would avoid the worst effects of climate change.

And yet, since the Paris Agreement was signed, the world has not done nearly enough.

And now, to keep 1.5 degrees within reach we must halve global emissions by 2030.

And that means taking action now. To launch a consistent and concerted effort to reduce emissions throughout the next ten years.

And it means making the next United Nations climate conference, COP26, the moment that every country, and every part of society, embraces their responsibility, to protect our precious planet.

To achieve this, the UK's COP26 presidency is pushing for action around four goals.

Firstly, to put the world on a path to driving down emissions, until they reach net zero by the middle of this century.

This is absolutely vital to keeping the 1.5 degree target within reach.

And we are asking all countries to set targets to get us to net zero by the middle of the century, and to come forward with 2030 emissions reduction targets to take us there.

And we are asking companies, and investors, and cities, regions and others to make similar commitments.

We are also pushing for action in vital areas like power generation, like clean transport and halting deforestation.

Where progress is absolutely essential to keeping 1.5 degrees alive.

We are co-hosting the Forest Agriculture and Commodity Trade Dialogue, with Indonesia, to protect forests and help farmers make a better living.

And we are working to end international coal financing, and urging countries to abandon coal power, and at the same time working with developing countries to support their transition to clean energy, including through our COP26 Energy Transition Council, which aims to make clean power the best option for all and support a just transition.

Our second goal is to protect people and nature from the impact of climate change.

Our climate is already changing, and it will continue to do so, even as we reduce emissions.

Having been born in India, and having spent time as UK International Development Secretary, I am committed that this COP will deliver for the communities most vulnerable to climate change.

So we are working to encourage action to protect people and nature, to increase support, and to ensure that funds are available for this important work.

And this brings me on to our third goal, finance.

Frankly, without adequate finance, the task ahead is near impossible.

So we are working to get funds flowing to climate action.

It is vital that donor countries mobilise the \$100 billions a year they have promised, to help developing countries respond to the climate crisis.

This is, quite simply, a matter of trust.

And it is central to the UK's COP26 Presidency, and our presidency of the G7.

Our fourth goal is working together, building consensus among governments, so the negotiations in Glasgow are a success.

We are also encouraging cooperation across borders and across society to keep the 1.5 degree target in reach, including by bringing businesses, civil society, young people, faith communities and Indigenous Peoples on board, behind our COP26 goals.

Because, as Global Witness has said in organising this event, we recognise that tackling the climate crisis relies on everyone playing their part.

Civil society, for example, can raise awareness, build support for strong government policy, and hold leaders to account, creating the conditions for ambitious climate action.

And it can help to represent the voices of communities, something the UK

COP26 presidency values very very highly.

Because we are committed to an inclusive COP26 where all voices are heard.

And that includes the voices of developing countries, of women, of young people and Indigenous Peoples.

Historically marginalised communities are some of the most impacted by climate change, but they also hold some of the most effective solutions to tackling it.

For example, as stewards of 80 percent of the world's remaining biodiversity, Indigenous Peoples hold unique and precious knowledge.

So, we are amplifying the voices of civil society and historically marginalised groups, and bringing them into the heart of COP26.

We are hosting regional dialogues with Indigenous leaders to highlight their leadership on nature based solutions.

I have committed to meet personally with youth and civil society climate activists in every country that I visit.

The UK's COP26 Presidency has established the Civil Society and Youth Advisory Council to help shape the Summit.

And we are supporting a mentoring initiative to help women from a diverse range of backgrounds participate in climate negotiations.

Businesses will also be involved in COP26. But only if they can demonstrate a real commitment to climate action.

We have been clear that all companies applying for a place in the UK Government managed spaces at COP26 must have joined the Race to Zero Campaign or set Science Based Targets.

That means they have committed to concrete plans to reduce emissions.

Plans based on the science, that align with the Paris Agreement, and that have been independently assessed.

Because there is no room for greenwashing at COP26.

Yet, to succeed, we need every part of society on board.

Because if we all play our part, we can make the goals of the Paris Agreement a reality.

And we can make COP26 the moment we put the world on a path to keep 1.5 degrees alive and deliver for those on the front line of climate change.

But we need your help.

So, please, advocate action, show us solutions and build public support.

So that when we meet in Glasgow, the conditions are set, to build a cleaner, brighter future for us all.

Thank you.