

Alok Sharma visits Caribbean to build support for COP26 climate goals

- Will see devastating hurricane damage and the threats of climate change faced by Small Island Developing States (SIDS)
- Following the G7, attention turns to G20 countries and how they can help support action against climate change and COP26

The COP26 President-Designate, Alok Sharma, will travel to Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda and Barbados to ensure the islands' climate priorities are reflected at the crucial UN climate change summit in Glasgow later this year.

He will meet with leaders from government, business and civil society to hear the huge challenges they face in the fight against climate change and how they can help ensure COP26 is both inclusive and successful for everyone. He is expected to stress the importance the UK COP Presidency places on mobilising finance for climate action, keeping 1.5 degrees in reach, and protecting people and nature from the worst effects of climate change.

These Caribbean islands play a vital role in making sure climate vulnerable nations are heard on the world stage. Antigua and Barbuda is the chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) negotiating group in the UNFCCC. The moral authority of Small Island States is a powerful reminder to G20 countries of the urgency of taking ambitious climate action.

During his visit to the island of Barbuda, the COP President will also see how communities there are building back from the devastation of Hurricane Irma in 2017.

Ahead of his visit Mr Sharma said:

“We know that so often it is the countries who contribute the least to climate change who feel the worst of its impacts. These Island States are on the front line, and many have been doubly hit with the effects of COVID-19 crippling their economies. As COP26 President I will ensure their voices are heard and people understand the unique challenges they face.

“It's now four months until COP26 which is our best chance of safeguarding the planet for everyone, building a brighter future and keeping the 1.5C target alive. There is no time to wait, G20 countries must respond to the moral authority and leadership of these countries.

“Ahead of this vital summit I am looking forward to meeting with representatives from Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda, and Barbados to hear their priorities and discuss how we can work together to ensure COP26 is a success.”

His Excellency Dr. Walton Webson, Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States said:

“Small Island Developing States often feel the brunt of the effects of climate change, and so their interests must be taken into account if COP26 is to be a success.

“I welcome the COP President’s important visit to the Caribbean this week, and his commitment to ensure the needs of these islands are central to the agenda in Glasgow.”