

British scientists to help tackle climate change through new £1 billion fund

British scientists and innovators will be able to access up to £1 billion of aid funding to develop and test new technology targeted at tackling climate change in developing countries, Prime Minister Boris Johnson will announce at the UN General Assembly today.

The Prime Minister will launch the innovative new Ayrton Fund to give developing countries access to the latest cutting-edge tech to help reduce their emissions and meet global climate change targets.

British expertise is already at the forefront of clean energy and global efforts to fight climate change. In the UK we have harnessed the power of renewable energy to cut our emissions by over 40 per cent – faster than any other G20 country – while growing our economy by more than two thirds.

British engineers are also helping revolutionise zero-emission transport at home and abroad. Last year, one in five electric vehicles sold in Europe was made in the UK.

The new fund is named after leading British scientist and suffragette Hertha Ayrton – a pioneering physicist, mathematician and inventor whose work contributed to major scientific advancements at the turn of the 20th century, including in electricity.

Her research into the flow of water and air also inspired the Ayrton fan which was used on the Western Front in the First World War to dispel poison gas from British soldiers in the trenches.

The UK is home to some of the world's best innovators in clean energy technology. Through the Ayrton Fund they and other scientists from around the world can work in partnership with developing countries to transform their energy sectors and reduce emissions by:

- providing affordable access to electricity for some of the 1 billion people who are still off the grid, including through innovative solar technology for their homes
- enhancing large-scale battery technology to replace polluting diesel generators and ensure clean energy can be stored and not lost
- designing clean stoves like electric pressure cookers for some of the 2.7 billion people who still rely on firewood – with the smoke damaging their health as well as the environment
- working with factories in major polluting industries like iron and steel, petrochemicals and cement to reduce their carbon output
- improving the technology behind cooling systems so energy isn't wasted – residential air conditioning alone is expected to raise global

- temperatures by 0.5°C in the years ahead; and
- designing low-emission and electric vehicles to cut pollution and make transport systems cleaner and greener

Speaking ahead of today's climate change event at the UN, the Prime Minister said:

Britain is a nation of innovators. Our scientists have been at the forefront of technological advancement for generations, pioneering world-changing inventions like the jet engine, the television and the lightbulb.

I have always been deeply optimistic about the potential of technology to make the world a better place. If we get this right, future generations will look back on climate change as a problem that we solved by determined global action and the prowess of technology.

The new fund I'm launching today rightly honours Hertha Ayrton – one of Britain's most extraordinary minds who drove relentlessly to improve our scientific understanding and left a legacy of innovation and creativity for which the world owes an immeasurable debt.

This innovative use of aid money benefits all of us and shows how we can use our aid budget to tackle climate change. The Ayrton Fund will back scientists and our world-leading tech industry – reducing emissions in the poorest countries with the help of our home-grown talent.

Business and Energy Secretary Andrea Leadsom said:

The UK is leading the world in tackling climate change – cutting emissions further than any other G20 country, becoming the first major economy to legislate to end our contribution to global warming and being nominated to host crucial UN climate talks next year.

Having successfully decarbonised while growing our economy, we're proud to work with the poorest countries, who suffer most from the impacts of climate change, to develop and deploy wind, solar and battery technology to help drive the clean energy transition.

International Development Secretary Alok Sharma said:

Climate Change will hit the poorest communities hardest and fastest. The UK's pioneering work through the Ayrton Fund will find innovative ways to develop clean energy solutions for homes, which

will transform the lives of the most vulnerable.