

# COP26 President Alok Sharma visits Egypt and Nigeria on climate change mission

- Alok Sharma visits Africa for second time in a month since taking on COP Presidency full time to drive forward climate priorities on the continent
- Visit to Egypt and Nigeria saw Sharma encourage leaders to set out net zero targets and ambitious plans to decarbonise their economies by 2030
- He met with activists and entrepreneurs in both countries and discussed exciting innovations to drive climate action

COP26 President Designate, Alok Sharma, has concluded a four-day visit to Egypt and Nigeria as he continues to drive progress on Africa's priorities for the climate crisis, including greater action for adaptation to the effects of climate damage and increased financing.

Egypt and Nigeria are two of Africa's largest economies and emitters of Greenhouse Gases (GHGs). Egypt also leads regional efforts to transition to clean energy and is an important voice in the climate negotiations for the Middle East and Africa.

In both countries, Mr Sharma emphasised the importance of submitting more ambitious and measurable short term climate action plans through NDCs (Nationally Determined Contribution) and long term strategies to reach net zero emissions by 2050, to align line with the Paris Agreement goal to limit global temperature rises to well below two degrees and pursue best efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C.

In Cairo, Sharma discussed the UK and Egypt's joint work on adaptation and resilience and opportunities to build back greener from the pandemic with Prime Minister, Mustafa Madbouly, and other government Ministers, including the Deputy Foreign Minister, Minister of Environment, Minister of Electricity and Renewable Energy and Minister of Finance.

He met Vice-President Osinbajo in Abuja, and spoke about the importance of Nigeria's leadership in climate action and noting the country's potential to mobilise its young population and transition to renewable energy.

Mr Sharma also met with the Ministers of the Environment and Finance, and the Chief of Staff to the President to discuss the progress that Nigeria is making on both mitigation and adaptation. Mr Sharma welcomed the removal of the petroleum subsidy and encouraged more renewable energy to be added to the grid which will provide greater access to electricity for Nigerians.

Following his visit, COP26 President-Designate Alok Sharma said:

I have been strongly encouraged by my visits to both Egypt and

Nigeria as I continue to work with countries across the globe in the lead up to COP26.

It is only by working together that we will be able to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement and it's vital to engage with countries that are not only vulnerable to the effects of climate change, but also have a role to play in mitigating it.

I thank the leadership in both countries for their openness and enthusiasm so far and look forward to meeting again ahead of the COP26 summit in Glasgow later this year.

Egypt's engagement on COP26 is critical, both as a prominent regional voice in the climate negotiations, but also as an innovator and provider of adaptation solutions.

It is home to one of Africa's largest solar farms, "Benban", which is supported by UK funding. The country expects to exceed its current target of 20 percent renewable energy by 2022, and is aiming for up to 50 percent by 2035. It has also taken a lead on shifting away from future coal, having shelved plans for the Hamrawein plant, Egypt's last coal fired plant, in favour of renewable alternatives. Alok Sharma encouraged Egypt to showcase this leadership by joining the Powering Past Coal Alliance (PPCA).

Nigeria is a major player on the continent, both in terms of its population size and its economic influence. Forty three per cent of its population is below the age of 15 and 60 percent of the population now lives in urban environments. It is Africa's second largest emitter of GHGs and has one of the highest deforestation rates in the world. While heavily reliant on oil and gas, the country has the potential to generate its own renewable energy and their May 2020 Economic Sustainability Plan has committed to extend the Solar Homes Systems to some five million households. From a climate change perspective, it faces both significant challenges but also has huge opportunities.

Nigeria's Minister for the Environment, Mohammad Mahmood Abubakar, said:

Good to meet Alok Sharma, the COP26 President-Designate on his visit to Nigeria and discuss a range of issues on Nigeria's climate change agenda. We welcome the UK's leadership on this critical global agenda and look forward to its hosting of COP26 this November that firmly recognises the particular needs and circumstances of Nigeria's and Africa's climate change challenges.

We look forward to the continued support of the UK as we rise to meet those challenges in ways that protect the environment whilst also supporting economic growth and long term stability and prosperity.

A spokesperson from the Office of the Egyptian Prime Minister said:

Prime Minister Madbouly praised the cooperation between Egypt and the UK in the field of adaptation to the effects of climate change, and the joint leadership of the two countries on the Adaptation Action Coalition launched last month.

In both countries, Sharma met with grassroots activists and civil society organisations to discuss the importance of an 'all of society approach' to tackling climate issues. In its COP Presidency the UK is engaging with people from all sectors working on the climate agenda, including youth activists, entrepreneurs and those focusing on women's empowerment and inclusion.

Shady Khalil, Co-Founder of Greenish said:

COP26 President Alok Sharma's meeting with civil society representatives in Egypt shows a clear will for a true representation of youth led organizations in Egypt, making COP26 more accessible and inclusive for more narratives from different communities around Egypt, MENA and the Global South.

With our work in Greenish, we are training and empowering thousands of youth to foresee and address climate change challenges in Egypt. We hope through the meeting we can create a platform to voice out their concerns, ideas and stories.

Rita Idehai, Social entrepreneur and Climate Change Activist said:

The impact of imploding Climate crisis in Nigeria is multidimensional. We need all hands, the government, the young, the old, civil societies and the private sector to address these challenges. Building back better is our collective responsibility.

From Egypt and Nigeria, Sharma will now travel on to India and Nepal where he will meet with leaders from government, business and civil society to hear how climate change is impacting communities and to discuss solutions.

## **Notes to editors**

- The UK will host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow on 1 – 12 November 2021.
- The COP26 summit will bring parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- The UK is committed to working with all countries and joining forces with civil society, companies and people on the frontline of climate

change to inspire climate action ahead of COP26.