

COP26 President visits Russia to set out the benefits of a net zero future

- Alok Sharma arrives in Russia to discuss cooperation on climate change ahead of the UK-hosted COP26 climate summit in November
- He will meet Russian ministers, business leaders, and civil society and encourage Russia to commit to net zero emissions by 2050
- COP26 President to welcome Russia's commitment to international climate cooperation at the Earth Day Leaders Summit on Climate in April

The COP26 President-Designate, Alok Sharma, is in Moscow to discuss Russia's role in international efforts to tackle climate change and strengthen support for a comprehensive negotiated outcome at the Glasgow conference later this year.

With less than five months to go before the critical UN climate change conference, Mr Sharma will meet with leaders from the Russian government, business and civil society to hear their priorities for COP26 and to explore areas of cooperation.

The UK is urging Russia, as a G20 economy, to join the movement to reach net zero emissions by mid-century, which is critical to limiting global temperature rise to 1.5C.

The COP President will also discuss the importance of protecting nature, noting Russia is home to more than 20% of the world's forests, as well as climate finance and efforts to help the world adapt to respond to climate risks.

Mr Sharma will also discuss the Ministerial meeting that he is hosting in London next month to drive progress towards an ambitious outcome in Glasgow, which Russia has been invited to attend.

As a world leader on energy efficiency, renewables, and innovation, the UK was the first major economy to commit to becoming carbon neutral by 2050, and more than 70% of the world's economy is now covered by a net zero target – up from 30% when the UK took over as the incoming COP Presidency. Russia has the potential to play a leading role, as a major hydrocarbon producer and exporter, and as the world's fourth largest emitter.

Economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic presents a clear opportunity for clean, green investment, particularly in infrastructure. The low-carbon economy offers huge potential for growth in the coming decades, with opportunities for Russia in renewable energy sectors.

While in Moscow, Mr Sharma will host a reception to open the Russia-British Chamber of Commerce Annual Business Forum on the topic of 'COP26: Opportunities for UK-Russia ESG Engagement'. He will also meet Deputy Prime Minister Victoria Abramchenko, Presidential Adviser on Climate Change Ruslan Edelgeriyev, and Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Vershinin.

Ahead of the visit, Mr Sharma said:

Climate change is a real and urgent threat to our planet, and time is running out to address it. COP26 is our last best hope of keeping that critical 1.5C target alive, and building a greener, brighter future for us all.

By capitalising on the benefits offered by shifting to a cleaner, greener economy, Russia has an opportunity to show real leadership as the world continues on its journey to net zero emissions.

I welcome the support President Putin has shown for international cooperation on tackling climate change, and look forward to constructive discussions here in Moscow. As the world's fourth largest emitter, Russia is an essential player in the fight against climate change.

Ends .