

Focussing on climate negotiations with six months to go until COP26

Secretary General, Prime Minister Johnson, Chancellor Merkel, Svenja, Ministers, Friends.

Today, I have the unique honour of being the only COP President-Designate to welcome ministers to the Petersberg Dialogue two years in a row. And it is a particular pleasure for me to be sitting next to my friend Minister Schulze as I do so.

Svenja, let me start by congratulating you for the proposal that you put forward yesterday to make Germany net zero by 2045, coupled with enhanced near-term ambition.

Colleagues will know that at last year's Dialogue we quite rightly focused on the unfolding impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, and the importance of the green recovery.

This year, with now less than six months to go to Glasgow, we are focusing on the negotiations.

And I am very keen that we use every moment of our time over the next two days to delve into adaptation, into finance, and of course, the outstanding elements of the Paris Rulebook, as Svenja has just said.

And we need to be exploring solutions to issues that require a political resolution.

And we need to provide clear guidance to our negotiators on what is expected from them ahead of Glasgow.

And we need to send a clear signal that the political will is there to reach a successful negotiated outcome at COP26.

Now friends, we are now all too familiar with these video conferences. They can sometimes feel very formulaic. What I sometimes refer to as the 'doom of Zoom'.

But, I request that we do everything we can to make full use of the opportunity that we have now today and up to Glasgow.

That we move beyond positional statements.

Instead, let's speak very frankly about what really matters to each of us, to each of our countries. And let's engage in a genuine conversation about how we, as ministers, can best contribute to resolving these issues.

It is only through flexibility, through leadership that we will find compromise.

And it is through that that we will agree a balanced package that makes the goals of the Paris Agreement a reality.

That is what each of us must bring to this virtual table today. And am really looking forward to the detailed discussions we're going to have.

But before we begin, I want to give you a quick but important update.

As many of you will know, in March the United Kingdom held a Climate and Development Ministerial meeting. And we agreed at this to set-up a Taskforce on Access to Finance, which is absolutely vital for developing countries around the world.

This will take a new, economy-wide approach to climate finance, aligning support behind developing country priorities.

And I am very pleased to say that we have developed the draft concept note already, which I am going to invite partners to work with us in shaping and take this work forward. And we will make this available shortly on the COP26 website.

For now that is all from me, I very much look forward to hearing from ministers and having an interactive discussion.

Svenja, back to you.