

PM commits to greener aid spending and sets out bid to host international climate summit in 2020

Theresa May has today put the UK at the forefront of climate action at the G20, by committing that all UK aid spend will support the transition to lower greenhouse gas emissions.

This makes the UK the first major economy to combine a legally binding 0.7% aid target with a commitment to align support for developing countries with the Paris Agreement.

This will mean that every penny we spend on support for developing countries – whether for education, job creation, or infrastructure – will be compatible with our shared climate change goals.

For example, when building roads or developing energy infrastructure, we will consider the greenest way to do this and use the best materials and design to manage the impacts of climate change that people are already feeling.

This will future-proof our spending, to help people, communities and businesses to better cope with the shocks and stresses of climate change.

In taking this step, the UK will be joining leading development financing institutions such as the Multilateral Development Banks and we will encourage other major donors to take similar action.

This comes as the UK's new target to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 becomes law this week. The secondary legislation was approved by both MPs and peers after receiving a broad welcome from business leaders, climate experts and environmentalists. This makes the UK the first G7 to country to legislate to end its contribution to climate change.

The PM will use her leading role at today's climate change session in Osaka to call for other G20 nations to take similar action on climate change. She is expected to say:

The facts, which are clear, should guide us: we are running out of time to act. We need a fivefold increase on existing 2030 commitments to remain below 1.5 degrees of warming.

In addition to stronger national commitments, we need determined implementation, and a change in how we invest. And we need to build resilience, both in our own societies and economies, and in the most vulnerable countries.

We can only tackle this crisis, and fully reap the benefits of the transition, if we act together. So I urge everyone here to push for

ambition and consider setting their own net zero targets.

On our joint bid with Italy to host COP26 in 2020, she will say:

These next few years are critical. This is why tackling this crisis has become such a high priority for the UK. And it is why we have offered to preside over COP26, in partnership with Italy.

As the first real test of our collective commitment at Paris to continually scale-up our emission reduction efforts over time, COP26 will be a critical moment. We will need to see both a significant ramping up in our existing medium term targets at the country level, and credible plans for what we are doing now to meet existing targets.

Our citizens – and our youth in particular, whose lives will be shaped immeasurably by climate change – demand action. We will be judged by history on how we act in the next few years.

Next year's COP26 summit will be the largest ever gathering of world leaders to drive international progress towards the goals set in the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change.

A total of 30,000 delegates including up to 150 world leaders would be expected to attend the summit.

The UK has the world's most concentrated grouping of scientific, civil society, and business expertise on climate change that would help develop the programme and objectives for the summit.

Alongside the main summit, the UK hopes to coordinate a wide-ranging youth programme, working with Italy. This will ensure that young people can make their voices heard and inform global climate policy.

On the UK's commitment to align aid spending with the Paris Agreement, Tim Wainwright Chief Executive of WaterAid said:

It is encouraging to see the UK government recognise that all investment must be resilient against the growing number of severe droughts, flooding and storms that threaten health and livelihoods.

The poorest communities are being hit hardest by climate change and they are paying for it increasingly through negative impacts on clean and safe water supplies. These communities, are the least resilient to climate events and must be prioritised. Without this, the significant development gains made over the last few decades will be rolled back, leaving hundreds of millions more people without the basic services of clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene.