

# PM press conference statement at the G20: 31 October 2021

Six years ago the Paris Agreement made an historic commitment to end the destruction and devastation caused by climate change.

Together they agreed to limit global temperature increases to well below 2 degrees with a view to keeping that increase at 1.5 degrees.

But hundreds of summits, speeches, press conferences like this later, those words and promises are starting to sound, frankly, hollow.

The science is clear that we need to act now to halve emissions by 2030 and keep 1.5 degrees within reach.

There are no compelling excuses for our procrastination.

Not only have we acknowledged the problem, we are already seeing first-hand the devastation climate change causes: from heat waves and droughts to wildfires and hurricanes.

And unlike many other global challenges, the solution to climate change is clear.

It lies in consigning dirty fossil fuels like coal to history, in ditching gas guzzling modes of transport and recognising the role that nature plays in preserving life on this planet, and harnessing the power of nature through renewable energy rather than orchestrating its destruction.

If we don't act right now the Paris agreement will be looked at in the future not as the moment humanity opened its eyes to the problem, but the moment we flinched and turned away.

We've seen some progress in the last few days and weeks.

Saudi Arabia, Australia and Russia have all made net zero commitments – meaning 80% of the global economy will wipe out its contribution to climate change by the middle of the century, up from 30% thanks to the UK's COP26 leadership.

Countries such as the United States have doubled their spending on climate aid. Every nation at this weekend's summit will end the financial support for international unabated coal projects by the end of this year.

But these commitments, welcome as they are, are drops in a rapidly warming ocean when we consider the challenge we have all admitted is ahead of us.

Just 12 G20 members have committed to reach net zero by 2050 or earlier. Barely half of us have submitted improved plans for how we will cut carbon

emissions since the Paris Summit in 2015.

And we have also failed to meet our commitment to provide \$100bn a year to support developing countries to grow in a clean and sustainable way.

The UN says emissions will rise by 15% by 2030, and they need to halve by then.

The countries most responsible for historic and present-day emissions are not yet doing their fair share of the work.

If we are going to Prevent COP26 from being a failure then that must change.

And I must be clear, that if Glasgow fails, then the whole thing fails.

The Paris Agreement will have crumpled at the first reckoning. The world's only mechanism, viable mechanism, for dealing with climate change will be holed beneath the water line.

Right now the Paris Agreement, and the hope that came with it, is just a piece of paper. We need to fill that piece of paper to populate it with real progress.

And I know that humanity has in it the power to rise to the challenge.

The UK has proved it can be done – we have lowered our greenhouse gas emissions by 44% in the last 30 years whilst increasing our GDP by 78%.

And we're cutting our contribution to climate change more and more every day.

We have made some progress at this G20. We have had a reasonable G20, but there is a huge way still to go.

We all know that we have the technology. What we need to do now is to raise the finance, but above all we need the political will, in Glasgow, to make those commitments.

And to keep alive the hope of restraining the growth of our temperatures to 1.5 degrees.

Thank you very much and see you in Glasgow.