

PM remarks at the Petersberg Climate Dialogue: 6 May 2021

Good afternoon everyone, it's great to be able to join you this year.

Over the next few months I suspect we're going to be hearing a great deal about Angela's legacy, Chancellor Merkel's legacy, the incredible impact she has had on Germany, on Europe and indeed on the world.

And your work on climate change has been at the heart of that achievement.

You presided over the very first COP, more than a quarter of a century ago and I hadn't remembered that you were of course the driving force behind the great leap forward that was the Kyoto Protocol.

And you created this now venerable institution in the climate calendar, an event that has consistently elevated climate change to the top of ministerial in-trays.

That is very important right now because as Svenja says, we can't allow action on climate change to become another victim of this appalling pandemic.

This will be the decade in which we either rise up as one to tackle climate change together or else we sink together into the mire.

And this year, at COP26, will be the moment at which the world chooses which of those two fates awaits us.

But while the solution to our climate conundrum is on the surface of it simple – achieve net zero and limit the rise in global temperature to 1.5c – the complex nature of international diplomacy is such that we can't just expect to make progress or hope to make progress in the 10 days of talks this November.

The stakes are too high for COP26 to become some kind of last-minute dash to the line.

And so it is absolutely vital that when we have time we should spend the next six months productively, untangling those knots and unblocking some of the stickiest issues.

If we do the hard miles now I hope that in November we can meet in person in Glasgow to hammer out the final details of what must be an era-defining outcome for our planet and for future generations.

And as hosts of COP26, we in the UK have a responsibility of course to make that happen.

So throughout this year Alok and I are pulling every lever, using every opportunity to make COP the success it needs to be.

And that, of course, includes next month's G7 summit in Carbis Bay where leaders of the world's biggest economies will be coming together, in person, face-to-face for the first time in far too long and climate change will be right at the heart of the agenda.

For one thing I can tell you the meeting itself will be completely carbon neutral.

But more significantly, it will be the first G7 at which every member has committed to hitting net zero by 2050.

Though in Angela's case, in Germany's case now, 2045, congratulations to you on your drive and your ambition.

That's great news for our planet and shows us as G7 leading by example. But in Cornwall I want to see much more.

I will be seeking commitments from G7 members to use their voices and their votes wherever and whenever possible to support the transition to net zero, kick start a green industrial revolution, and build economies that can withstand whatever our changing climate throws at us.

And I also hope to secure a substantial pile of cash with which to help all countries to do that.

We simply must meet our existing commitments on climate finance, that long-overdue \$100 billion a year target, and then we must go further still.

Because I think it is really up to us in the wealthier economies just to walk a mile in the shoes of developing nations.

Who are more likely to feel the effects of climate change, less able to withstand the impact it has, and all the while striving to raise the living standards of billions of people.

As those of us who have benefitted from 150 years of carbon-heavy industry lecture from the side lines about the need for clean growth.

Developed nations cannot stop climate change on their own, but if we want others to leapfrog the dirty technology that did so much for us, then we have a moral and a practical obligation to help them do so.

That means putting our money where our mouth is, which is why the UK recently doubled its climate finance contribution.

At the G7 and other international fora I will not hesitate to bend the ear of my fellow leaders on the need for them to do the same.

Because if all that emerges from COP26 is more hot air than we have absolutely no chance of keeping our planet cool.

It must be a summit of agreement, of action, of deeds not words.

For that to happen then over the next six months we must be relentless in our ambition and determination, laying the foundations on which success will be built.

Today's event is the latest stepping stone on the path to Glasgow.

So let's use it to show the world just how serious we are about delivering the change we need.