Window for climate action closing fast

- The window to keep 1.5C in reach is closing fast
- Global growth in emissions slowed in last decade but further urgent action vital
- UK COP Presidency calls on countries to deliver on the historic Glasgow Climate Pact agreed at COP26

The United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report published today (Monday 4 April) shows growth in global emissions has slowed over the past decade, but much more needs to be done, including halving global emissions by 2030, to keep the goal of 1.5C in reach and avoid the worst impacts of global warming.

The IPCC's independent report highlights the need for urgent action in decarbonising energy, industry, transport and making homes more energy efficient, to achieve the Paris Agreement's central goal of keeping a global temperature rise this century to well below 2C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5C.

The report also shows reasons for optimism with a trend showing a slowing growth of global emissions. It also details how economic growth can be achieved alongside ambitious emissions reductions and the falling costs of renewables. Since 2010, solar energy costs and lithium-ion battery costs have decreased by around 85%, and wind energy by around 55%.

The UK is calling on countries to deliver on the Glasgow Climate Pact, in which 197 countries agreed to revisit and strengthen their 2030 emissions reduction commitments (Nationally Determined Contributions) as necessary this year to align with the Paris Agreement temperature goal and thereby limit the worst impacts of climate change.

Governments from around the world have spent a fortnight at a UK-hosted session examining climate scientists' evidence for this report. The IPCC has concluded that to limit warming to 1.5C, global emissions must peak before 2025, and then be halved by early 2030s – in part by ending the world's reliance on fossil fuels, including reducing use of unabated coal by three quarters by 2030.

COP26 President Alok Sharma, said:

> This report makes clear that the window to keep 1.5 degrees alive is closing alarmingly fast. The warning lights are yet again flashing bright red on the climate dashboard and it is high time for governments to sit up and act before it is too late.
>
> That is why it is absolutely vital that as agreed in the Glasgow Climate Pact all countries, especially the G20 nations which are responsible for 80 per cent of global emissions, revisit and strengthen their 2030 emission reduction targets this year as

> necessary to align with the Paris temperature goal if we are to avoid the catastrophic impacts of climate change.
>
> But this report also gives hope that the rate of growth in emissions is slowing and that thanks to the falling cost of renewables and technological innovation it is possible to transition to a cleaner future.
>
> We know that a net zero economy presents huge opportunities for growth and the creation of good green jobs and so countries and companies need to accelerate that transition.

The UK has already committed to reducing carbon emissions by 68% by 2030 and by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels, before reaching net zero by 2050 as set out in the UK's comprehensive Net-Zero Strategy. It is calling on the global community to honour the commitment to provide at least $100bn a year to support developing countries take ambitious climate action.

UK Minister of State for Energy and Climate Change, Greg Hands, said:

> Today's report is a reminder to the world of the grave threat of climate change.
>
> There is still a window of opportunity to act to reduce the effects.
>
> The UK is going further and faster to generate more cheap and clean renewable power. This will reduce our exposure to expensive global gas prices.
>
> We call on the global community to seize the moment and join us in stepping up a green transition.

The IPCC's last report, published in February, warned that some of the impacts of global warming are "irreversible", with more than 40% of the world's population now highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, such as extreme weather events like floods and heatwaves.

Today's report also highlights the economic opportunities from the transition to a net zero economy, with the falling costs of renewable energy, and comes six months after the UK published a comprehensive Net Zero Strategy. This sets out how it will secure 440,000 well-paid jobs and unlock £90 billion in investment by 2030, by helping British businesses and consumers transition to clean energy and green technology. It included £1 billion investment in electric vehicles, £3.9 billion for insulating our homes, along with support for commercialising sustainable aviation fuel and help heavy industry move to hydrogen power.

This month the UK is starting to spend its £200 million pledged to support developing countries cut emissions through the new extension of the

Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions (PACT) programme.

The UK will also soon publish a new International Climate Finance (ICF) Strategy, laying out its delivery plan for £11.6 billion of investment to help countries across the globe respond to the climate emergency. The funding represents a doubling of support for communities worst affected by global warming.

- The IPCC provides the most authoritative, cutting-edge, scientific assessment of climate change. Independent of politics, the IPCC provides Governments around the world with a totally impartial scientific evidence base for climate policy and UN climate negotiations.
- Its scale of global scientific collaboration is unique, bringing together hundreds of world-leading authors from across the world. This Working Group report on mitigation has been developed with 278 scientists from 65 countries, all who have volunteered their time and expertise to produce this report.
- This latest report is the product of 7 years' work with thousands of contributions from scientists, individuals and countries, through an extensive review and consultation process.

Piles of rubbish cleared from M56 as National Highways supports national litter-picking campaign

The government-owned company has joined Keep Britain Tidy's 'Big Bag Challenge' and pledged to pick at least 8,000 bags of litter for this year's Great British Spring Clean.

And a targeted litter pick on Friday 1 April saw maintenance teams clear rubbish from the M56 at Junction 12 near Runcorn where they received a helping hand from Keep Britain Tidy campaigners and Mike Amesbury, MP for Weaver Vale.

National Highways has collected 60,000 bags during the previous six Great British Spring Clean campaigns and is taking part for a seventh year.

Paul Elliott, National Highways' maintenance service manager for the North West, said:

> Millions of people travel on National Highways roads like the M56 every day and despite efforts like this to clear it, our network quickly becomes littered from vehicles and unsecure loads.

> Litter is a serious social problem with devastating consequences for wildlife and the environment. Clearing litter from the side of roads also exposes maintenance crews to significant risk.
>
> Our priority is to keep our roads safe and well maintained, and litter is a huge issue that we are tackling daily. We urge people to save litter for the bin, rather than throwing it on the side of the road.

Keep Britain Tidy estimates it costs around £1 billion every year to clean up litter. Litter also poses a serious safety risk on roads as verges and barriers form corridors where litter and debris build up at an alarming rate, creating a hazardous environment for road users, wildlife and the maintenance crews who clean it up.

While the Great British Spring Clean runs for a matter of weeks, National Highways picks litter throughout the year and carries out regular inspections to make sure England's motorways and major A-roads are in good condition.

Mike Amesbury, MP for Weaver Vale, said:

> It was good to be out with the team from National Highways, but it's a shame they have to be there because of an irresponsible minority of drivers. Not only is the litter unsightly but it's deadly to mammals and wildlife.
>
> Workers are having to pick up 60 bags of rubbish every single day. And it's quite hairy having to do that exercise on motorway verges and slip roads, as well as costing money to the taxpayer that would be better spent elsewhere.
>
> The key ask is for people to do the responsible thing and take their rubbish home for recycling or discard it in a litter bin at a service station.

Lucy Fell, account director for Amey, said:

> We deliver a range of maintenance work on behalf of National Highways to help keep people moving. It's shocking to see the amount of litter on the sides of our roads.
>
> To litter pick the side verges, we need to install lane closures to ensure safety for our operatives and the travelling public. By taking part in the Great British Spring Clean, we're encouraging everyone to save their rubbish for their bin, reducing the need for our operatives to litter pick and time better spent improving the road network.

National Highways also wants to hear from you if you spot something wrong on their roads. This could be anything from a broken sign or barrier, to litter, overgrown vegetation or potholes.

Reporting a maintenance issue to National Highways can be done online or by calling 0300 123 5000.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the National Highways customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the National Highways press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

New VMD Blog now live

News story

Announcing the launch of our new blog page with information to complement our regulatory guidance.

We are pleased to announce the launch of our Blog which we will use to enhance our regulatory guidance and give an insight into the workings of the VMD. Our blog will share with you:

- more information on our non-regulatory activities and services
- best practice and cautionary tales for vets and retailers through real-life examples
- how we work to protect you and your business from unsafe or illegal medicines activity
- about our people and what it’s like to work at the VMD

Blogs posts available now:

Published 4 April 2022

UKHO provides S-100 navigation data for Mayflower Autonomous Ship during at-sea testing before departure for US coast

The UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) has announced that it is the provider of S-100 navigation data for the Mayflower Autonomous Ship (MAS) project. This marks the first time that S-100 data is tested aboard an unmanned or autonomous marine vessel. The vessel is currently in Plymouth Sound in the UK, undergoing an at-sea trial which started on 28 March 2022 and is testing the ability of the ship to read, integrate, and use S-100 data.

The UKHO is funding the integration and testing of S-100 Universal Hydrographic Model data into the Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) software stack for the MAS project. The S-100 data provided by the UKHO is designed to be machine readable and higher resolution than S-57 electronic chart data, which MAS previously relied on to inform the onboard mission manager – and will be the future standard supporting digital navigation products globally.

During the current trial, the MAS is demonstrating its ability to read and interact with the S-100 data provided by UKHO and safely manoeuvre autonomously, recreating a typical passage from sea to Devonport Naval Base – a 'what-if scenario' that requires an unusual and potentially hazardous passage, deployment to and from the Mayflower Base at Turnchapel Wharf, across Plymouth Sound and to and from the sea. Numerous iterations of these test scenarios are being run in varying sea states, tidal flow, and wind and weather conditions, as well as with local vessel traffic. During these, the MAS is simulating behaviours of a larger autonomous ship, performing and behaving like a Royal Navy Frigate in terms of size, manoeuvrability, draft, and other vessel characteristics.

Safety is paramount for the project, with a human operator always on the loop from the remote operations centre and a local safety boat in proximity to the MAS at all times.

Commenting on the announcement, Mark Casey, Head of Research, Design & Innovation at the UK Hydrographic Office, said:

> It is fantastic to be able to play an important part in the Mayflower Autonomous Ship project as provider of the S-100 data that will inform the navigation of the vessel. Our contribution to the sea trial, which will see the use of S-100 aboard an unmanned ship for the first time in history, is a proud milestone for us at the UKHO. It not only reinforces our position as an internationally recognised Hydrographic Office, but also as a leading institution in the advancement of autonomous navigation and development of S-100.

> We are grateful to our partners and all parties involved in this exceptional project, which will highlight the importance of S-100 as an enabler of autonomous navigation in a way that the world has not seen before. The MAS project is of major significance for the potential of autonomous shipping and will have crucial implications for the wider industry.

This project will be highly relevant for the user case of S-100 as it will provide feedback on the utility of the S-100 data and format, identify gaps in the data and method of deployment and integration, and provide real-world operational testing that will inform future deployments of S-100 data from the UKHO to other manned and unmanned vessel operators across the world. The MAS project will also help to advance the state of the art in marine autonomy and will be crucial for the advancement of autonomous shipping.

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