

# The vital role of the academic community in delivering COP26 aims

Good morning. It is a pleasure to join you.

And thank you to everyone who has helped to organise this event.

Particularly our Italian partners. And it is a pleasure to speak alongside my friend Minister Cingolani.

Over the years, it is academic evidence, research and rigour that have helped to make the case for climate action.

To push the issue up the political agenda.

And to shape the world's response to it.

Whether that is James Hansen at the Senate Committee.

Or, indeed, the Stern Review.

Or the IPCC.

And that's not mentioning the countless innovations and insights that have helped us to find solutions to the challenges that we collectively face.

From engineers working on wave energy. To anthropologists assessing adaptation.

And today, I am asking the global academic community to deploy that research and that rigour, through innovations and insights, to help us deliver on our aims for COP26.

And particularly our ambition to put the world on the path to net zero.

And our COP26 campaigns. These campaigns are driving progress in five areas where action is absolutely vital:

On adaptation, on finance, nature based solutions, clean energy and clean transport.

Of course, academics are already using their knowledge to support these efforts.

The UK COP26 Presidency is very pleased to be working closely with the COP26 Universities Network.

They are doing a great wonderful job, bringing research to governments and the public, and to support action on climate change.

And it is fantastic to see that this conference today is focused so closely

on our key COP26 priorities.

Because, frankly, your involvement is vital.

We need you to drive solutions.

Improving technologies in areas like zero emissions vehicles and clean energy.

And developing solutions to adaptation, including by joining the Adaptation Research Alliance, which will launch at COP26.

But we also need you to get involved in practical action, like helping health systems build their climate resilience.

And to keep modelling the risks of climate change.

Mapping those effects that could unravel if we pass certain tipping points.

We need you to bring together current knowledge.

And fill gaps where they exist.

In areas like nature-based solutions, for example.

And, crucially, we need you to communicate your findings to governments.

Enter the public debate. And inform policy.

Because your research can help to drive up government ambition and action.

By demonstrating the scale of the threat we face, the knock-on benefits of action, and the solutions available.

And your evidence is essential if government responses are to be grounded in the science.

Which they, of course, must be.

So please, get involved in discussions with politicians and policy makers.

Make clear to them the full scale of the threat of climate change, and the crisis that we will unleash if we do not act in time.

And show them the benefits of the resilient, zero emission economy, whether for jobs, GDP, nature or health.

Help governments to see clearly that they can, and they must, take critical steps now.

From closing down coal plants, to protecting forests, and moving to zero emission vehicles.

Show them the solutions available, from mangroves to wind farms.

And help them visualise how they can apply them.

Because it is only through a collective effort.

In this vital year for climate action.

That we can build a cleaner, more resilient world.

Thank you.