

# PM opening statement at COP26 Press conference: 14 November 2021

Good afternoon everybody and apologies for interrupting your Sunday afternoon, but I wanted to say a few words about the truly historic achievement that was secured in Glasgow last night.

I'm very, very pleased to be joined by Alok Sharma, my friend the President of COP.

For two weeks at COP26 politicians and negotiators and campaigners from around the world have been locked in talks about how we're going to keep our planet habitable for future generations by getting real about climate change.

It was the biggest political gathering of any kind ever held in this country.

And there was a reason for that.

All these world leaders came to Glasgow because their populations are telling them they need to act.

We've heard about the peril we face if we fail.

We've heard from the individuals who are already living with the effects.

And yesterday evening we finally came to the kind of game-changing agreement the world needed to see.

Almost 200 countries have put their name to the Glasgow Climate Pact, marking a decisive shift in the world's approach to tackling carbon emissions, setting a clear roadmap to limiting the rise in global temperatures to 1.5 degrees and marking the beginning of the end for coal power.

Because for the first time ever a UN climate change conference has delivered a mandate to cut the use of coal for power generation.

And it's backed up by real action from individual countries – for example we've arranged a multi-billion pound partnership to help South Africa ditch coal and create new green jobs instead.

On top of that we've brokered a deal with the G20 to end international finance for coal by the end of next month.

We've persuaded most of Western Europe and North America to mirror the commitment I made last December by pulling the plug on financial support for all overseas fossil fuel projects by this time next year.

And when you add all that together it is beyond question that Glasgow sounded the death-knell for coal power.

It's a fantastic achievement and it's just one of many to emerge from COP26.

90 per cent of the world's economy is now following our lead here in the UK by committing to net zero, ending their contribution to climate change altogether.

Don't forget when Alok Sharma took up the COP reins it wasn't even a third who committed to net zero.

The developed world is finally going to hit the \$100 billion climate finance target – albeit a bit later than we all would have liked.

Over 130 countries have signed up to halt and reverse deforestation by 2030 – between them they're home to more than 90 per cent of the world's forests.

We've got trillions of pounds of private sector assets lined up with climate goals.

We've even managed to do something that has eluded the world for six years by finalising the Paris Rulebook, allowing us to move from interminable debates about how to measure emissions and instead get on with cutting them.

Of course my delight at this progress is tinged with disappointment.

Those for whom climate change is already a matter of life and death – who can only stand by as their islands are submerged, their farmland turned to desert, their homes battered by storms – they demanded a high level of ambition for this summit.

And while many of us were willing to go there, that wasn't true of everyone.

Sadly that's the nature of diplomacy.

We can lobby, we can cajole, we can encourage but we cannot force sovereign nations to do what they do not wish to do.

It is ultimately their decision to make, and they must stand by it.

But for all that we can be immensely proud of what has been achieved by Alok Sharma and his team.

I want to take this opportunity to thank him for his many months of tireless diplomacy, and thank everyone involved in making COP26 a success – from the bobble-hatted volunteers to Peter Hill and his team in the COP Unit.

I know it's tempting to be cynical.

To dismiss these types of such summits as a series of talking shops.

But we came to COP with a call for real action on coal, cars, cash and trees and that's exactly what we've got.

And just look at what it all means for our planet.

Before Paris, the world was on course for a devastating four degrees of warming this century.

After Paris, we were heading for three degrees.

At Glasgow we've turned that dial down to around two degrees.

That's still far too high.

But for all our disagreements the world is undeniably heading in the right direction.

Even the most pessimistic commentator will tell you that that goal of restricting the growth of temperatures to 1.5 is still alive.

Now the work continues to make it a reality.

Alok is going to keep pushing, along with everyone else in the UK Government to strengthen the promises made in Glasgow and make sure they're delivered rather than diluted.

The UK Government will get on with our extraordinary record of decarbonisation, get on with delivering our green industrial revolution and exporting that revolution worldwide.

There's still a long journey ahead of us and very little time to complete it.

But COP26 has shown us that we can do this.

We can end our reliance on coal and fossil fuels.

We can put the brakes on runaway climate change.

And we can preserve our unique planet for generations to come.

I want to finish by thanking once again the people of Glasgow for providing a spectacular summit, and of course, I want to thank Police Scotland as well for everything they do.

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## **Government to invest £375 million in neurodegenerative disease research**

- Funding includes at least £50 million for motor neurone disease related research to find a cure
- New NIHR Motor Neurone Disease Research Unit to attract more innovative research applications

People living with neurodegenerative diseases could live longer, healthier

lives due to innovative new research, following a government commitment to invest £375 million over the next 5 years.

At least £50 million will be made available specifically for research to help find a cure for motor neurone disease (MND) – a condition that affects the brain and nerves and affects 5,000 people in the UK. New, innovative projects will help researchers to better understand the disease and its related conditions, develop and test treatments and improve care for those living with MND.

The full £375 million investment will fund projects into a range of diseases such as Pick's Disease, Fronto-temporal dementia, wernicke-korsakoff, Parkinson's disease dementia, Lewy Body dementia, Alzheimer's disease and mild cognitive impairment, improving our understanding while searching for new treatments.

For MND, a new NIHR Research Unit will be set up to coordinate research applications for the new funding, encouraging more innovative studies with the ultimate goal of finding a cure.

The government has already invested millions of pounds in MND research, including over £7 million to support pioneering clinical trials, which have led to major advances in how the disease is understood. This includes improving our understanding of how different types of MND are passed on genetically which could unlock new treatment options for patients using gene therapy.

There is currently only one drug licensed in the UK to treat MND – Riluzole – which slows the progression of the disease and extends someone's life by a few months. The funding announced today will accelerate progress across the UK to find better treatments for MND, and give people living with the condition the chance of a better quality of life, and more good years with their loved ones.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Sajid Javid, said:

Neurodegenerative conditions like MND can have a devastating impact on people's lives and I'm committed to ensuring the government does everything we can to fight these diseases and support those affected.

We've already invested millions in understanding and treating MND and our new funding commitment will back more research into this and other neurodegenerative diseases.

The UK is a global leader in medical research. Our world-class research sector was central to the discovery of lifesaving treatments for COVID-19 like dexamethasone and Tocilizumab, as well as the development of the vaccine programme which has saved hundreds of thousands of lives.

We will continue to harness this expertise and innovation to

support pioneering projects to find better treatments for those living with motor neurone disease, like the excellent work underway at NIHR Sheffield Biomedical Research Centre where scientists are trialling new drugs to treat the condition.

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

The UK is home to some of the most transformative and innovative medical research in the world, and the availability of this research funding, alongside the work of our strong life science and pharmaceuticals sector, will make the most of that research to help those living with motor neurone disease.

It is vital that we increase our understanding of this condition in pursuit of new treatments and better care, and I am pleased to see UK institutions at the forefront of that work.

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) has committed to ongoing research into MND, reinforced by issuing a [Highlight Notice](#) inviting applications from ambitious research projects to take potential treatments from the lab to the clinic, as part of scaled-up efforts to significantly improve the care and support available.

The NIHR has also awarded a prestigious Research Professorship to leading motor neurone disease researcher Professor Chris McDermott. The award will focus on improving care for people with MND, bolstering leadership in this area of research, and strengthening the design of clinical trials to help more people with the disease take part.

While there is still work to be done, significant progress is already being made – including through the development of better data resources such as MND Register and MND Biobanks which support researchers working to better understand the disease.

Improved data sets make it easier for scientists to monitor responses to treatment in clinical trials. And through innovative and flexible trial designs, researchers are able to conduct faster and cheaper trials which will deliver potential new treatments to patients more quickly.

As well as the funding for research into neurodegenerative diseases, a new motor neurone disease partnership will be formed to pool expertise and resources across the research community to accelerate the delivery of new treatments. The partnership, backed by £4 million, is co-funded by the National Institute for Health Research, UK Research and Innovation, Life Arc, MND Association and My Name's5 Dottie Foundation.

Researchers can apply for funding via the NIHR and UKRI websites.

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## Two-minute silence as the nation remembers

- Members of the Royal Family and senior politicians to attend National Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph
- Veterans and members of the public will return to Whitehall for this year's service

At 11:00 today, the UK will fall silent to remember all those who have died in conflict since the First World War.

As well as a national two-minute silence, wreaths will be laid at war memorials across the country and Members of the Royal Family will join senior politicians at the Cenotaph in London for the National Service of Remembrance.

This year's service will return to normal with approximately 8,000 veterans taking part in The Royal British Legion's Veteran Parade and members of the public returning to Whitehall after the service was closed to the public in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

For those unable to travel to London for the National Service of Remembrance or to their local Remembrance Sunday service, the national event will be broadcast live on BBC One, Sky and ITV as well as on YouTube.

### **Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:**

Today we come together to remember those who sacrificed everything in service of our country, in the First World War and every conflict since, including recently in Iraq and Afghanistan.

It's a sacred ceremony that has endured for more than a century because we know the unpayable debt we owe those brave servicemen and women.

We know that for our tomorrow they gave their today. And we know that here at home and around the world, thousands of men and women in uniform still stand ready to defend our unity and our way of life, our values, and at a cost few among us would be willing to pay.

Today we come together. We wear our poppies with pride and stand as a nation in two minutes of silent tribute.

**Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries said:**

Every year we come together on Remembrance Sunday to honour the brave men and women who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

I am pleased that this year we can welcome back veterans in the march past and the public to be part of this special service. I hope that people across the country and from every walk of life will join those attending today in remembering those to whom we owe so much.

**Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:**

On Remembrance Sunday we pause to remember all those who died in the service of their country and reflect on the sacrifices our personnel continue to make on operations around the globe. The commitment and sacrifice of our veterans continue to inspire today's service personnel as they strive to honour their legacy.

**Chief of the Defence Staff General Sir Nick Carter said:**

It is an honour to lay a wreath at the Cenotaph on behalf of all those who have lost their lives in the service of our country. They died to protect the free and open way of life that we enjoy today. On Remembrance Sunday all members of the Armed Forces will reflect on this legacy, regardless of where and in what circumstances they are serving, sure in the knowledge that they now have the responsibility to uphold the values and standards that their forebears espoused.

**Minister for Defence People and Veterans Leo Docherty said:**

Every year on Remembrance Sunday, we reflect on the incredible courage and commitment of our armed forces and veterans. Their dedication to our country will never be forgotten and we continue to honour their sacrifices.

**Bob Gamble, Assistant Director for Commemorative Events at the Royal British Legion, said:**

For one hundred years the Royal British Legion has led the nation in Remembrance to ensure the memory of those who have served and sacrificed on our behalf is upheld. Remembrance is part of the fabric of society, reminding us of our shared history, and today it continues to unite people of all backgrounds, communities, and generations.

Nearly ten thousand veterans will march past the Cenotaph to honour those who have defended freedom and democracy, and that number will also include hundreds of young people from the Cadets, Guides, and Scouts. It is vital the torch of Remembrance is passed to younger generations and we're proud so many will be attending alongside veterans of all ages. The RBL invites everyone to join us, in our special Centenary year, as we reflect on the selflessness of the Armed Forces community over the Remembrance weekend.

Those planning to attend the National Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph should follow the government's latest Covid-19 guidance. Public are asked not to attend if they have symptoms of Covid-19 or have been instructed to self-isolate.

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## [We must stand together for freedom and democracy](#)

We believe in freedom and democracy. Freedom loving societies are not just the best places to live, they are the most successful.

When the Berlin Wall fell and the Iron Curtain came crashing down three decades ago, renewed democracies were established across Eastern Europe. People have become freer, living better lives and their children have better futures. But these hard-won gains are now at risk with malign, autocratic regimes seeking to take away people's freedom.

Look at what's happening in Belarus. The escalating standoff at the Polish border marks the latest step by the Lukashenko regime to undermine regional security. He is using desperate migrants as pawns in his bid to create instability and cling onto power, regardless of the human cost.

The United Kingdom will not look away. We will stand with our allies in the



region, who are on the frontier of freedom. That's why we are proud to be the first European country to assist Poland by agreeing to send a small team of personnel to provide engineering support to ease pressure at the border.

In the same way, we were the first European country to put sanctions on the Lukashenko regime, targeting over 100 individuals and organisations with measures including asset freezes and travel bans. This shows we are ready to take the lead in standing up for freedom and democracy, acting robustly, decisively and relentlessly to take on malign actors wherever they are in the world.

We are not just standing side by side with Poland as they bear the brunt of this shameful manufactured migrant crisis, but also others in the Visegrad Four – Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic – and our friends in the Baltics and Ukraine.

In Belarus, this carefully crafted crisis is an attempt to divert attention away from the litany of abhorrent acts and human rights violations that the regime has already committed. Since the fraudulent election in August 2020 we have seen members of the opposition, journalists and activists beaten, jailed and killed, while others have been forced into exile.

In contrast to their tyrannical leaders, the people of Belarus are true democrats. Time and again we have seen ordinary citizens risking everything to stand up for their rights and keep the flame of freedom alive. As the chair of the Belarusian Association of Journalists, Andrei Bastunets, said: "Today, the law does not defend us. Today, we defend the law."

Russia has a clear responsibility here. They must press the Belarusian authorities to end the crisis and enter into dialogue.

We need to fight for the rule of law, freedom and democracy, and we must take that fight to the where that ideological battle is. Security is no longer solely about military hardware. The battle is now taking place in cyber space, the economy, and in the appalling use of people as collateral.

We will join forces with our partners to advance our shared interests. At the NATO foreign ministers' summit in Riga in a few weeks' time, we will put forward new proposals to challenge the 21st century methods of aggression being used by those who threaten our freedoms, economies and democracies.

The world is changing and modern threats are more multifaceted and complex. That idea lies at the heart of the Integrated Review of security, defence, development and foreign policy the government published earlier this year. We need to work with allies who believe we must have a world where freedom loving democracies don't just survive – they thrive.

That is why we remain the largest European spender on defence in NATO – the world's greatest defence alliance. It is why we are working with friends and allies in South East Asia where we are deepening our defence, maritime and security ties. This week in Indonesia, the world's third largest democracy, I agreed new ties in cyber. I also visited Thailand and Malaysia, where our

cooperation includes the Five Power Defence Arrangements. We are also increasing our defence collaboration with India, Israel and many others around the world. Through AUKUS we are collaborating with the US and Australia on the next generation of technologies.

I want our friends across Europe to join us. That means standing together for example in opposing the construction of the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline. It risks undermining European security by allowing Russia to tighten its grip on those nations who rely on its gas, despite the pandemic reminding us about the importance of having diverse supply chains to avoid being strategically dependent on unreliable partners.

At this critical time, we should be deepening our investment and trade ties with countries that follow the rules and allow free market economies to thrive. We cannot, and will not, ever give succour to those who want to undermine freedom and democracy.

Together with our friends and allies, we can build a network of liberty, working to repel these malign actors to ensure freedom loving people can live in peace.

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## [PM: Glasgow Climate Pact keeps critical 1.5C global warming goal alive](#)

- Prime Minister welcomes historic climate agreement reached at COP26 in Glasgow which keeps 1.5C goal alive
- Global action on coal, cars, cash and trees as well as new net zero commitments secured under UK Presidency
- PM urges greater action throughout our year of COP26 Presidency to drive down emissions and support countries on the frontline of climate change
- The Prime Minister Boris Johnson has welcomed the landmark agreement adopted at COP26 today, which keeps the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5C in reach provided countries continue to take ambitious action over the next decade.

Over the last two weeks, tens of thousands of people from 196 countries have come together in the UK to make history. The 'Glasgow Climate Pact' reached this evening commits countries to phase down unabated coal, supports a just transition for developing countries and action to tackle loss and damage, and agrees for the first time a common timeframe and methodology for national commitments on emissions reductions.

Crucially, countries are also asked to return next year with a more ambitious

2030 emissions reductions target (their Nationally Determined Contribution) in line with the 1.5C target, ensuring we maintain crucial momentum on climate action this decade. The UK will continue to push for greater action on reducing emissions and supporting developing countries with finance and access to new green technology over the next year of our COP Presidency, before Egypt take on the mantle.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

We asked nations to come together for our planet at COP26, and they have answered that call. I want to thank the leaders, negotiators and campaigners who made this pact happen – and the people of Glasgow who welcomed them with open arms.

I also want particularly to thank COP President Alok Sharma who has worked incredibly hard to bring countries together.

There is still a huge amount more to do in the coming years. But today's agreement is a big step forward and, critically, we have the first ever international agreement to phase down coal and a roadmap to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees.

I hope that we will look back on COP26 in Glasgow as the beginning of the end of climate change, and I will continue to work tirelessly towards that goal.

The negotiated text agreed this evening comes on the back of a series of pledges and announcements made during the COP26 World Leaders Summit and theme days, which have driven transformative action on coal, cars, cash and trees and mark a shift in the relationship between people and planet.

On coal, 65 countries have now committed to phasing out the use of coal power. All major coal financing countries have committed to end international coal finance by the end of 2021, with \$20 billion in funding to support the transition to clean power announced at COP26. There is now more work to be done to ensure all major emitters sign up to phase out coal.

On cars, we worked to build consensus on the pace of the transition to zero emission vehicles. Over 30 countries and some of the world's largest car makers committed to work together to make all new car sales zero emission globally by 2040, and by 2035 in leading markets, building on the UK's commitment to end the sale of all new petrol and diesel cars by 2030.

On cash, more public and private finance has been mobilised to support climate action in developing countries than ever before and the global financial system is aligning behind a net zero world. New pledges made at COP26 bring us closer to meeting the \$100bn annual climate finance target next year and ensure we will exceed it after that, as well as mobilising billions in private finance and green investment. Governments have committed to double the overall finance for adaptation and better address the threat of loss and damage in climate-vulnerable countries – we will now work with all

countries to make good on those pledges.

And on trees, more than 130 leaders, representing over 90% of the world's forests, pledged at COP26 to end deforestation by 2030, backed by almost £14 billion of public and private funding.

The COP26 Summit follows nearly two years of intensive global climate diplomacy, led by UK COP President Alok Sharma, to listen to the needs of climate-vulnerable countries and push big economies to take greater action on cutting emissions. At least 90% of the global economy is now covered by net zero commitments, up from 30% when the UK took on the COP presidency in 2019, and 154 countries and parties representing 80% of global emissions have submitted NDCS.

The UK will continue to work with other countries to deliver on the Glasgow Climate Pact and drive further action, working closely with Egypt which will take over the COP Presidency in November 2022.