

# Joint statement between COP26 President-Designate Alok Sharma and Bolivian President Luis Arce Catacora

Bolivia's President Luis Arce Catacora and COP26 President-Designate Alok Sharma met on 2 August 2021 in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, in advance of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change– COP 26 in Glasgow. They released the following statement:

We reaffirmed our commitment to enhancing cooperation between Bolivia and the United Kingdom in tackling the causes of climate change and its adverse effects. Both countries agreed to continue to lead by example. The UK is driving forward its green industrial revolution on its path to net zero by 2050, and Bolivia is developing a strategy for holistic and sustainable development within the framework of the philosophy of Living Well in harmony with Mother Earth.

We highlight that we have discussed the impacts of climate change and the particular vulnerability of Bolivia, and other developing countries, and we agree that COP26 should serve as the stage to make progress towards an effective implementation of the Paris Agreement, with urgent actions to protect both people and Mother Earth. In this context, we underline the urgent need to increase funding that can help developing countries promote adaptation to the impacts of climate change and the need to avert, minimize and address loss and damage. We have exchanged views on how COP26 will initiate deliberations on the post-2025 climate finance target and also on how to accelerate delivery on the Global Goal on Adaptation.

COP26 President-Designate Sharma recognises Bolivia's commitment on keeping the 1.5 target alive and the urgent need for countries to enhance ambition. Bolivia set out its views on the "call for urgent and equitable action to stop climate collapse and restore balance with our Mother Earth," within the framework of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and promotion of the debate around strengthening of adaptation and improvement of capacities and means to face the extreme climatic risks faced by the most vulnerable countries in the face of the climate crisis.

Bolivia also highlighted its role in the also highlighted the role of Bolivia in the Like-Minded-Developing Countries Group. The COP President Designate noted the work of Bolivia as a thought leader in the defense of the rights of Mother Earth, as a driving country in putting the voice of indigenous peoples at the center of the climate change dialogue, as well as its leading role in establishing non-market-based approaches.

Bolivian President Arce commended the UK's dynamic leadership of COP26 as well as of global efforts in the comprehensive implementation of the Paris Agreement, in particular in mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, climate financing and international cooperation. He announced Bolivia's decision to

participate in the LEAF coalition to protect the world's tropical forest and thanked the UK for its support in its application, in the framework of Bolivia's implementation of alternative joint mitigation and adaptation approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests approved in the Paris Agreement. He further recognised the important role of the UK's Darwin and International Wildlife Funds in protecting Bolivia's environment and welcomed, for analysis, the UK government-funded Energy Transition Study for Bolivia presented to him.

Finally, we highlight the discussion on the importance of achieving an ambitious and balanced negotiated outcome at COP26, and the need to work together to achieve this and secure compromise through all channels available. Finally, we agreed to continue to work closely beyond COP26.

Santa Cruz, 2 August 2021

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## [Science Minister announces UKRI's open access policy](#)

Thank you for inviting me to speak to you today.

Imperial College has an impressive history as a research-intensive institution and an exciting future. I'm thrilled about the opportunity to visit your White City campus and to see what you've been building there – I've been told I'll see 'levelling up' in action! And of course the work you've been doing to make your research available open access has been an inspiration to the whole sector – not just in the UK but abroad.

This government places science, research and innovation at the heart of our plans to build back better from coronavirus. We fully recognise that it has been only through the ingenuity, creativity and courage of our scientists and inventors that we have found a way out of the pandemic. We will learn from this as we forge a better life for ourselves in the years ahead.

So, it is crystal clear to me, to this government, that we can only realise our ambitions by helping brilliant people to flourish and reach their full potential.

And a big part of this means changing the culture of research and innovation.

It was therefore a huge pleasure to publish the UK's first ever R&D People & Culture strategy last month.

I am genuinely thrilled that the UK government is, for the first time, taking clear and ambitious steps towards tackling some of the longstanding issues that we know we face in research and development (R&D), for example by

valuing technical skills, by addressing bullying and harassment, by fixing our PhD training offer, and by embracing diversity in all forms. By working together to follow the path set out in the strategy, we will achieve something amazing.

We'll grow a stronger, more vibrant and more engaged workforce.

We'll become the very best place in the world to be a researcher or innovator.

And we'll lead the future by creating it.

But today I want home in on one specific aspect of research culture, and that is open research.

It has been true for a long time that our research sector has a particular and unequivocal drive towards openness. We have a duty to make the findings of publicly funded research openly available, to make them as useful and impactful as possible to all potential users, for the benefit of everyone.

It was Professor Dame Janet Finch who famously wrote the following words about open access:

The principle that the results of research that has been publicly funded should be freely accessible in the public domain is a compelling one, and fundamentally unanswerable.

This was in 2012.

Nine years later, this principle remains unanswerable – even as global threats evolve.

Just take the COVID-19 pandemic.

In just one month, researchers sequenced the viral genome and shared it freely online as an open-access publication in the Lancet. Researchers from around the world went on to build incredible new data-sharing tools, opening up rich new data sources on epidemiology or policy, and posting countless new findings onto preprint servers.

Many journals took the necessary step to make all their papers relating to COVID-19 freely available.

By sharing research as openly and quickly as possible, and learning quickly from negative results and any unsupportable conclusions, we delivered the vaccines and treatments that are our surest way to stopping this deadly pandemic in its tracks.

This should be an example to all of us of what's possible when research culture changes, and when behaviour changes. And what can be done when open research practices are widely adopted, with no excuses. But this isn't a new

imperative. Open research is an agenda where the UK has long been in the global lead. When it comes to the UK's position on this agenda – I'm a believer!

And we should recognise that we have made good progress. Significant amounts of publicly funded research have been made free to read and reuse.

Studies show that at least 28% of articles are now free to read – increasing to perhaps half of all articles by some measures. And a recent study of 1,207 universities found that some made as much as 80 to 90% of their research free to read in 2017 – with 40 of the best-performing 50 in Europe being UK universities.

Other nations have been inspired by our courage and our conviction. From the Australian Research Council to Horizon Europe, many other governments, agencies and programmes have introduced open access policies of their own.

And I am thrilled that we were able to get a strong G7 commitment to open science this summer as part of the UK G7 Presidency, with agreement to incentivise open science practices; and promote the efficient and secure processing and sharing of research data across borders that is as open as possible, and as secure as necessary. Publishers, on the whole, have been responding to the incentives – and should be praised for showing leadership and not shying from the challenge we have set. Read-and-publish deals have been struck with Springer Nature, Wiley and the Microbiology Society. The pioneering open access publisher PLOS is piloting a new pricing scheme to eliminate author charges. And the ground-breaking Open Library of Humanities is now supported by over 300 institutions, making research across its 28 titles openly fully available to a wider audience.

Of course, there will be hurdles to overcome as everyone adapts. But the prize of open research is more valuable than any one stakeholder or business model.

The truth is that we must all go further.

There are still far too many articles that end up locked away behind paywalls – being cut off from an unimaginable range of useful applications in industry, in healthcare, or in wider society.

And when articles do become openly available, this is too often after a year or two has passed, when the embargo has finally been lifted and when in all likelihood the boat has sailed, the opportunity has passed, and the research field has moved on.

And there is a further wealth of research in the humanities and social sciences which winds up published in scholarly monographs, often with eye-watering price tags, and available only on the bookshelves of a small number of university libraries – not reaching the audiences it should.

When the most up-to-date record of human progress is locked away behind a paywall – and where those in need of publicly funded knowledge are told to cough up or lose out – you know that the situation has to change.

What I'm talking about here is work which is paid for by us all, in taxes. Work that we make a choice to invest in for our collective benefit.

And it's work which is quality-assured by researchers themselves, through the network of volunteer peer reviewers.

Arguably, it is the ultimate public good.

In the digital age, where a "paper" is but a microscopically small yet infinitely reproducible string of ones and zeros, we should all see the tantalising opportunity in front of us, to share freely the fruits of knowledge far and wide.

So that is why I am delighted to announce that UKRI is launching its new open access policy. This is a policy that will achieve the government's ambition, set out in the R&D Roadmap, of full and immediate open access for research articles – so from the day of publication, the results of UKRI-funded research are available for all. This policy will ensure that the results of UKRI-funded research are made as freely available as possible – not just for reading, but for reusing and recombining with other results, and creating the shared repository of human knowledge that will unlock the potential of even more people, in the UK and abroad, to learn, to discover, and find innovative new solutions to our most pressing problems.

And while it seems obvious that this is a necessary move by UKRI, it is not a decision that they have taken lightly. They have consulted and engaged on this policy for well over a year, talking to countless stakeholders and receiving over 350 inputs to their consultation. UKRI have gathered new evidence and engaged closely with other funders such as Wellcome to learn from their experiences and find common approaches.

And I am particularly pleased that the UK has, from the start, been a central player in the major international collaboration, Plan S – a plan to deliver full and immediate open access to the world's research output. As a global science superpower, it is right for the UK to be at the heart of the global push for open research.

I also know that full and careful consideration has been given to the details in the UK context. I have listened to the arguments and met with many stakeholders myself.

My conclusion is that UKRI are to be applauded for taking this decisive step.

Of course, opening up the findings of research won't change culture on its own. The open research agenda is about more than what's written on the pages of journals and books.

The open research agenda is also about improving the very fabric of research, changing the way it's undertaken as well as the way it's communicated. This means opening up new possibilities for more creative and imaginative ways of undertaking and sharing research. And increasing transparency and sharing across the research process. As much as possible, we need to apply the principles of transparency and free access to more than just scientific

publications. Open research encompasses all aspects of the research process, and research artefacts such as data, code and materials.

That is why it's so important that we see the continuing emergence of new initiatives like Octopus: an experimental new platform for scientific research to be made available as separate elements – the problem statement, the methods, the data, and so on – all linked together, and all openly available.

Octopus has the potential to significantly disrupt the way that research is communicated, improving research culture. I'm delighted to announce that Octopus will receive £650,000 in funding from Research England's Emerging Priorities Fund over the next three years, to help develop this prototype into a reality.

And while technology is important, it is critical that we get the incentives right, as we are indeed doing. Open research is already a key feature of the current Research Excellence Framework, as it will be in the next.

And the Global Research Council of the world's research funders recently agreed that open research should be considered a dimension of research excellence and should be incentivised in assessment criteria.

This is something that funders take very seriously, and it is an area which will be key to delivering the vision set out in the People and Culture Strategy that I launched last week.

Let me conclude. The UK has a proud history at the forefront of research communication.

The Royal Society can proudly lay claim to inventing both the academic journal and the system of peer review that underpins it, way back in 1665.

It's not hard to imagine our forefathers, themselves striving to build back better from the devastating impact of the bubonic plague, becoming energised by the new scientific discoveries published by the Royal Society – and bringing the Age of Enlightenment blinking into life all over Europe.

And fast forward to 1989, as particle physicists at CERN smashed electrons and positrons together in a huge underground ring, British scientist Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web – a new tool for connecting scientific knowledge in online web pages, and an invention which has defined the modern age.

And it was Stevan Harnad, a cognitive scientist from Southampton University, who prominently questioned the very purpose of the printing press in this new scientific digital age, sparking development of the EPrints research repository platform and the world's first utterance of the term "open access".

It was then my predecessor David Willetts who recognised the public interest in open research, and kindled those sparks of the early adopters into a flame, with Janet Finch's report giving research funders the mandate to take

those early steps towards a policy.

So, as we strive to build back better from the pandemic of today, now we can take our own step forward.

By unequivocally opening up the UK's publicly funded research for free and open use and reuse, we will usher in a new scientific digital age – one where the unnecessary constraints on knowledge are cast off.

Today's announcements are our own watershed moment in our history as a scientific nation.

Together we will develop a new culture of openness and collaboration, as an essential part of building the research culture we need to embrace the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Thank you.

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## [2020 grade data-sharing agreement reached](#)

News story

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) will deal with applications to access 2020 assessment data.



Accredited researchers will be able to apply to access the GRADE (Grading and Admissions Data for England) dataset, we can confirm today. This comprises key data about centre assessment grades and calculated grades in 2020.

This agreement means researchers can explore, analyse and study a unique dataset of information held by 3 different organisations with reference to the period 2017 to 2020:

- Ofqual – GCSE and A level exams and qualifications data collected from awarding organisations
- Department for Education (DfE) – the National Pupil Database, providing a rich set of background information on GCSE and A level students
- UCAS – data from the university application system

The DfE and the UCAS data is already available but, thanks to this agreement, the Ofqual data will soon be available to accredited researchers. Data will be securely accessible through the Office for National Statistics [Secure Research Service](#).

Researchers will be able to use this data to find out more about GCSE and A level results and university admissions and applications in England, as [this Ofqual blog](#) outlines. It includes information about qualifications, grades achieved, students' prior attainment and grade boundaries. And it will be used to allow evidence-based lessons from 2020 assessment and inform assessment policy on issues such as equality. Any publication will only report aggregated data.

We are now beginning to transfer this data to the ONS. The GRADE data will appear in the Office for National Statistics Secure Research Service data catalogue for accredited researchers to apply the week beginning Monday 16 August. If you are interested in knowing more about the data and its potential use you can email us at [data.sharing@ofqual.gov.uk](mailto:data.sharing@ofqual.gov.uk). Researchers will also be able to apply to [ADR UK](#) for funding – more details will be available soon.

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## [MV Mercer Street attack: G7 Foreign Ministers' statement](#)

Press release

The G7 Foreign Ministers and the High Representative of the European Union condemned the unlawful attack on the MV Mercer Street on 29 July 2021.





Statement from the Foreign Ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America and the High Representative of the European Union:

We, the G7 Foreign Ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America and the High Representative of the European Union stand united in our commitment to maritime security and the protection of commercial shipping. We condemn the unlawful attack committed on a merchant vessel off the coast of Oman on 29 July, which killed a British and a Romanian national. This was a deliberate and targeted attack, and a clear violation of international law. All available evidence clearly points to Iran. There is no justification for this attack.

Vessels must be allowed to navigate freely in accordance with international law. We will continue to do our utmost to protect all shipping, upon which the global economy depends, so that it is able to operate freely and without being threatened by irresponsible and violent acts.

Iran's behaviour, alongside its support to proxy forces and non-state armed actors, threatens international peace and security. We call on Iran to stop all activities inconsistent with relevant UN Security Council resolutions, and call on all parties to play a constructive role in fostering regional stability and peace.

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## [Panel of experts to shape future of music education](#)

A team of experts has been assembled to help shape the future of music

education so that all pupils have the opportunity to sing, and be taught a musical instrument and make music with others, the government has announced today (Friday 6 August).

The new expert advisory panel will help produce a new National Plan for Music Education (NPME) next year. The plan will be informed by the [music education consultation report](#) published today, which found that studying music can have a positive impact on young people's wellbeing, confidence and communication skills.

The panel is made up of teachers, Music Education Hub leaders, music industry representatives and other music education experts, including representatives from the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, UK Music, as well as Darren Henley, Chief Executive, Arts Council England (ACE), whose independent Review of Music Education in England informed the original NPME.

The new NPME, co-published by the Department for Education and Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, will build upon the current plan that saw the establishment of the national network of Music Education Hubs, which support the delivery of music education in schools all over the country.

Schools Minister Nick Gibb said:

Having the opportunity to be taught and play musical instruments is enriching and fulfilling. I, like many others, wish I'd had a stronger music education and had more of an opportunity to play instruments in my time at school.

That's why we want all schools to have a rigorous and broad music curriculum, that inspires their pupils to love music, and the new panel will play a vital part in achieving that by informing the new National Plan for Music Education.

Their wealth of experience will be hugely valuable to the future of music education, helping to inspire a new generation of musicians in this country.

Culture Minister Caroline Dinenage said:

I'm delighted to have such a brilliant team of music industry experts supporting this refresh of the National Plan for Music Education.

The panel's expertise will guide us to ensure that young people from all backgrounds will have access to an exceptional music education. This will not only benefit student wellbeing, but also help grow the pipeline of people participating in our wonderful cultural and creative sectors.

The appointment of the panel, chaired by Veronica Wadley (Baroness Fleet), follows a government consultation on music education which found that studying music can have a positive impact on young people's wellbeing, confidence and communication skills.

Chair of the panel, Veronica Wadley said:

I am delighted to be chairing an outstanding panel of advisors who I know will make a great contribution to the refreshed NPME – and help shape the future of music education.

It is so important that every child and young person, from whatever background and area, has the opportunity to benefit from learning to sing and play a musical instrument, improving not only concentration, self-confidence and academic attainment but also raising expectations of what they can achieve in all areas of their lives.

Panel member, Yolanda Brown said:

Music is powerful, it gives joy, hope, escapism and more. I believe that every child and young person should have the opportunity to access and experience music with no barriers, from the most diverse composers and genres.

I am honoured to be part of the NPME advisory panel, full of passionate people who like me, want something special for young people across the country on their music education journey.

Panel member Jamie Njoku-Goodwin said:

Music education is vitally important, not just because of the huge role it plays in enriching the lives of so many children but also because of the immense cultural, social and economic contribution it makes to our country.

We look forward to contributing to a new National Plan that will give pupils from every background the best possible opportunities and recognise music as one of our greatest national assets.

The panel will work with the DfE and DCMS to ensure the refreshed plan supports the government's aims for all young people to have access to a high quality music education and opportunities to explore music as far as their interest and talents allow.

The government also published the [consultation response on music education](#) today which will help to inform the refreshed NPME, due to be published early next year.

The panel will consist of:

- Veronica Wadley (Baroness Fleet) (Chair) – Co-Founder and Chair of the London Music Fund, Council Member of Royal College of Music, Governor of Yehudi Menuhin School and Chair of the Expert Panel for the Model Music Curriculum
- Bridget Whyte – CEO, The UK Association for Music Education – Music Mark
- Carolyn Baxendale MBE – Head of Bolton Music Service (Greater Manchester Music Education Hub)
- Catherine Barker – Head of Music and Performing Arts, United Learning and President-Elect, Music Teachers' Association
- Darren Henley – Chief Executive, Arts Council England (ACE)
- David Stanley BEM – Chief Executive and Founder, The Music Man Project and UK Government's Arts and Culture Disability and Access Ambassador
- Ed Watkins – Director of Music, West London Free School
- Jamie Njoku-Goodwin – Chief Executive, UK Music
- Jonathan Badyal – Head of Communications, Universal Music UK
- Naveed Idrees OBE – Headteacher Feversham Primary Academy
- Phil Castang – Director of Creative Learning and Engagement, Bristol Beacon and Chairman of the Music Education Council
- Sarah Alexander OBE – Chief Executive and Artistic Director, National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain
- Simon Toyne – Executive Director of Music, David Ross Education Trust
- Dr Steven Berryman – Director of Arts, Culture and Community, for the Odyssey Trust for Education
- Yolanda Brown – Musician / Broadcaster