

38th Universal Periodic Review of human rights: UK statement on Paraguay



The Universal Periodic Review takes place in Geneva.

The United Kingdom welcomes steps taken by Paraguay to promote and protect human rights, notably the promulgation of Law 5777/16 to eradicate all forms of violence against women in Paraguay. As the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the issue around the world, we encourage Paraguay to prioritise full implementation of this law by ensuring universal access to health, education and justice to all women and girls.

We also encourage Paraguay to share information on its mechanisms to protect human rights defenders, including those working on environmental issues and journalists, particularly regarding freedom of expression and freedom of assembly.

We recommend that Paraguay:

1. Safeguards the land tenure systems for all, including indigenous people and ensures they are protected from all forms of modern slavery such as forced or compulsory labour and debt bondage.
2. Passes legislation prohibiting discrimination, including comprehensive prohibitions against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.
3. Undertakes measures to prevent high incidence of early, unintended pregnancy, including comprehensive sexuality education in schools and access to services in support of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Thank you.

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[Liz Truss call with New Zealand Minister Damien O'Connor](#)

News story

A readout of International Trade Secretary Liz Truss's call with the New Zealand Minister for Trade and Export Growth, Damien O'Connor.



LONDON – The Secretary of State for International Trade, Liz Truss, has had a positive call today with New Zealand Minister for Trade and Export Growth Damien O'Connor.

They discussed the progress being made in negotiations to agree an ambitious, comprehensive Free Trade Agreement that supports jobs and provides more opportunities in key industries of the future like services, digital trade and the green economy.

Both sides agreed that good progress towards this objective was made during the fourth round of trade talks and committed to accelerating the process, with a view to working towards an agreement in the coming months.

Teams will now intensify talks, with Chief Negotiators meeting monthly, and the next formal rounds of talks will be scheduled for early June and July.

[The importance of development banks raising climate ambition ahead of COP26](#)

The past 12 months have been one of the most challenging periods faced by humanity in modern times. And world governments have responded. They've collectively deployed trillions of dollars, particularly in developed nations, to support lives and livelihoods.

And we've also seen what the Asian Development Bank has done when faced with a Covid crisis. A 20 billion dollar response package, providing a nine billion dollar facility to help developing member states access and distribute Covid-19 vaccines.

And yet, whilst the world has been battling the Covid pandemic, the other ever-advancing and existential threat of climate change has not taken time off.

And if we're really serious about climate action, we must show the same urgency and resolve in tackling climate change as we have Covid.

Right now, the world is some way away from meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement.

And the ever stronger effects of climate change are being felt across the world, across Asia. We are heading for average temperature rises of over two degrees. And for very many millions of people across the world, that spells catastrophe.

We have less than a decade left to keep the 1.5 degree target within reach. And that will require us to halve our emissions by 2030.

So, COP26 has to be the moment we get the world on track to make the goals of the Paris Agreement a reality and to keep that 1.5 alive.

To do that, we have four goals for the UK COP26 Presidency.

First, to put the world on a path to net zero emissions by the middle of the century with ambitious national 2030 emissions reductions targets along the way.

Second, to boost adaptation.

Third, to get finance flowing to climate action.

And fourth, for us to work together relentlessly. Enhancing international collaboration on critical issues like clean energy and nature. So that we get this green transition moving faster.

Countries mounting clean recoveries to the Covid-19 Pandemic is absolutely vital.

And, with Asia Pacific's booming energy demand, actions on a clean energy transition in this region will determine whether or not we achieve our aims.

That makes the work of the ADB absolutely vital.

Because finance underpins all climate action.

And therefore, I call on the ADB to do all it can to support the efforts of countries in the region to deliver on their emissions reduction targets.

Take, for example, scaling up programmes like the NDC Advance platform, to support developing countries with national climate plans.

Or improving access to climate finance, particularly for the most vulnerable.

And then setting an ambitious target of the proportion of climate finance which goes to adaptation whilst increasing support for nature-based solutions.

Investing in climate action as part of a green recovery, is not only good for the planet. It is sound economics.

Every \$1 that is invested in adaptation sees up to \$10 in benefits.

The global move to green growth creates huge commercial opportunities.

The investments in renewables can create more jobs than their fossil fuel equivalents.

A recent report published by the University of Oxford highlights that investment in renewables infrastructure can create more than twice as many jobs as the equivalent in fossil fuels.

The cost of wind power has dropped by almost 50% since 2010. And the cost of solar energy has dropped by a staggering 80% over the same period.

Renewables are now cheaper than new coal and gas in the majority of the world. And costs will keep falling.

Meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement does not mean weaker economies. Quite the contrary.

So I urge all countries to invest in green recoveries.

And I welcome ADB's Green Recovery Programme in South East Asia.

By contrast, investing in coal runs the very real risk of stranded assets.

\$630 billion worth if the existing coal pipeline goes ahead, according to Carbon Tracker.

And putting an end to coal is essential if we are to keep the 1.5 degree target within reach.

Today, global coal use trends are driven primarily by Asia.

So I urge all countries in the region to phase out domestic coal use and end international financing of new coal plants.

Pakistan and the Philippines have said no to new coal.

Korea has vowed to end overseas coal finance.

The tide is turning towards cheaper, cleaner power. But the time for action is now.

And I commend the ADB's proposals to formally end all coal financing in its own new energy policy.

I also recognise your target to have invested \$80 billion in climate finance by 2030.

But in this vital year I urge you to go further:

Make a more stretching target for the proportion of the Bank's funding that is climate finance.

Increase efforts to mobilise more private climate finance.

Use your energy policy to end support for fossil fuels, except gas in exceptional circumstances.

Set a date by which you will align all your operations with the Paris Agreement, as the World Bank and others are doing.

Use your role as Chair of the Joint MDB Paris Alignment process to urge other MDBs to do the same.

And, with other MDBs, sign a joint statement on nature at COP26.

The role of this region and its institutions is absolutely pivotal. And will determine how and if we secure our future.

Finally, I say this to all friends at this event. If ever there was a cause which deserved vigorous multilateral engagement, climate action is it.

If ever there was a time to elevate the response to climate change and biodiversity loss, this is that time. There will be no second chances.

So let's work together and make this the year that we put the world on a path to a green recovery and, in doing so, make the goals of the Paris Agreement a reality.

Green motoring milestone with half-a-million ultra low emission vehicles now on UK roads

- ultra low emission vehicles account for more than half-a-million cars on British roads, as more drivers make the switch to zero-emission motoring
- landmark figure revealed ahead of UK hosting COP26 later this year
- the news comes as stats reveal that nearly 1 in 7 new cars sold in 2021 so far have a plug

The UK is accelerating further towards a greener transport future, as stats released today (5 May 2021) reveal that over half-a-million ultra low emission vehicles are now being driven on roads across the country.

This comes as statistics from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) show that 13.6% of new cars sold in the past 4 months had a plug, with ultra low emission cars accounting for more than 1 in 10 sales last year, up from 1 in 30 the year before.

The UK is at the forefront of the electric vehicle revolution, with the government [committing to end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030 and to ensure all new cars and vans will be zero emissions at the tailpipe by 2035](#).

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

As hosts of COP26, we want to drive decarbonisation on the global stage, which is why we're going further and faster to make the journeys of our future as clean as possible.

With news that the half-a-million milestone has now been met, together with the UK now having the second largest EV market in Europe, it's clear that the shift to green motoring is accelerating at speed.

The government has pledged a [£2.8 billion package of measures to support industry and drivers to make the switch to cleaner vehicles](#). This will help us meet our climate change obligations, improve air quality in our towns and cities and support economic growth, with vehicles built here in the UK.

A significant number of EV models have seen price reductions in recent months – making them more accessible and affordable for motorists around the country – as more and more people make the switch to ultra low emission vehicles.

More affordable batteries also mean that manufacturers have been able to increase the range of these vehicles, with many EVs now able to drive over 200 or even 300 miles on a charge, so that motorists can use them for longer journeys.

Not only that – today, a driver is never more than 25 miles away from a rapid chargepoint anywhere along England’s motorways and major A roads. And the UK already has a network of over 23,000 public chargepoints, with more fast chargepoints per 100 miles of key strategic road than any other European country.

The government has committed to provide £1.3 billion over the next 4 years – from the wider supportive package – to encourage the continued roll-out of chargepoints on motorways and major A roads, in homes and businesses and on-street.

Mike Hawes, SMMT chief executive, said:

The automotive sector is transforming the way we drive, investing billions in ever greener and cleaner vehicles across the range, with 1 in 4 available models now capable of being ‘plugged in’.

Over half-a-million people are already convinced by the incredible driving experience and we hope millions more will make the switch as Britain strives to become the best place to build, buy and drive electric vehicles.

[Fast track immigration route opens for prestigious award winners](#)

Winners of awards, including Nobel Prizes, the Turing Award, Oscars and Golden Globes, will be able to live and work in the UK more easily under reforms being introduced by the Home Office.

From today (May 5) individuals who have won [prestigious awards](#) from across the sciences, humanities, engineering, the arts and digital technology will be able to take advantage of changes to the Global Talent visa route.

Currently, people on the [Global Talent route](#) have to successfully apply to one of six endorsing bodies. The new fast track route launching today would allow applicants who hold a qualifying prize to fast track the endorsement application and instead make a single visa application.

The eligible prize winners include:

- science, technology, engineering and maths: Nobel Prize winners in Physics, Chemistry, Economic Science and Medicine; Queen Elizabeth Prize for Engineering; Fields Medal; Turing Award
- music: Brit Award – International Male/Female; Mobo – Best International Act; Grammys – Lifetime Achievement Award
- film, TV and theatre: Various Academy Award and Golden Globe categories; Bafta – Best Film Actress/Actor/Director; various Tony Awards and Olivier Awards
- arts & literature: Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize; Hugo Boss Prize; Nobel Prize – Literature

Winners of certain awards across dance, fashion, architecture, and social sciences will also be included.

The Global Talent route is part of the UK's new points-based immigration system, which will attract the best and brightest to the country depending on the skills they can bring, rather than their nationality.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

Winners of these awards have reached the pinnacle of their career and they have so much to offer the UK. These important changes will give them the freedom to come and work in our world leading arts, sciences, music, and film industries as we build back better.

This is exactly what our new point-based immigration system was designed for – attracting the best and brightest based on the skills and talent they have, not where they've come from.

The government has worked with the endorsing bodies to draft the initial list of qualifying prizes, which will be kept under review.

Since it came into force in February 2020 thousands of people have used the Global Talent route to enter the UK.