

PM Climate Ambition Summit opening remarks: 12 December 2020

Thank you very much Zeinab, thank you Secretary-General Antonio, thank you to my fellow leaders, excellences.

Good afternoon from London, where we are coming to the end of an extraordinary and difficult year, I think with a sudden surge of scientific optimism.

Because after barely 12 months of the pandemic, we're seeing the vaccine going into the arms of the elderly and vulnerable, vaccines that have been products each and every one of them of vast international efforts in laboratories around the world.

And so my message to you all, is that together we can use scientific advances to protect our entire planet, our biosphere against a challenge far worse, far more destructive even than coronavirus.

By the promethean power of our invention we can begin to defend the earth against the disaster of global warming.

And by that I mean that together we can reduce our emissions, we can radically cut our dependence on fossil fuels, we can change our agricultural practices, and in short we can reverse the process by which for centuries, humanity has been quilting our planet in a toxic tea-cosy of greenhouse gases.

And at the same, we can create hundreds of thousands of jobs, millions of jobs across the planet as we collectively recover from coronavirus.

If you doubt our ability to do that, let me tell you that when I was a child of six, this country depended on coal for 70% of our energy needs. That coal dependency is now down to 3% or less and since 1990, the UK has cut our CO2 emissions by 43% – more than any other G20 nation – and yet our economy has grown by 75%.

Today, we're putting our foot to the accelerator – in a carbon friendly way of course – with a Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution.

We want to turn the UK into the Saudi Arabia of wind power generation, enough wind power by 2030 to supply every single one of our homes with electricity.

We're going ahead with massive solar programme, even though we can't hope to emulate the incredible things being done by India, Australia or Morocco for instance. Hydro of course – we're liberating the awesome potential of hydrogen, whether for homes or all sorts of uses.

On electric vehicles we're going to ban ICEs, new internal combustion engines by 2030, with a very ambitious programme. We'll continue to develop new

nuclear power.

We want to lengthen the lead of London, the UK, as the natural home of green finance. We want our homes to be emitting progressively less and less CO2 and doing more and more retrofitting of our homes. And wherever the UK may be accused of lagging, we won't be lagging my friends in lagging.

We want to encourage all modes of green transport, cycling, walking and so on. We want to use the relatively new miracle of carbon capture and storage actually to take carbon from power generation and industrial processes and bury it in under-sea caverns created by the extraction of hydrocarbons.

And we're now consecrating 30% of our waters, 30% of our land surface, to nature, because we think wild nature is the best way and most effective way of retaining carbon in a natural balance.

We do all these things because they're right for the world, they're right for our country – but also because we know that this green industrial revolution will generate as I say hundreds of thousands of high skilled, high paying, good quality jobs for generations to come.

And we're going to help our friends around the world by moving away from supporting drilling and mining for hydrocarbons, but putting £11.6 billion of our overseas aid to support green technology and decarbonisation across the planet.

We want to work with all of you on this call, on this conference – let's do it together. Let's make it our collective commitment, as Antonio has just said, to get to net zero by 2050.

We in the UK, as he says, are going to do our bit, we're reducing our emissions by 68% at least on 1990 levels over the next decade. And I'm really awed and humbled by the efforts of other countries around the world to set their own targets.

And I just want to repeat that key message. We're doing this not because we are hair shirt-wearing, tree-hugging, mung bean-munching eco freaks – though I've got nothing against any of those categories, mung beans are probably delicious. We're doing it because we know that scientific advances will allow us collectively as humanity to save our planet and create millions of high skilled jobs as we recover from COVID.

So thank you all very much for joining this conference, this Ambition Summit, thank you to Secretary General Antonio, thank you to my co-host Emmanuel Macron, who I know shares my keen interest in protecting the ecosystems of our seas and oceans, and I look forward to seeing you all in Glasgow face-to-face next year.

[PM announces the UK will end support for fossil fuel sector overseas](#)

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[UK sets out ambitious approach to strengthening climate adaptation and resilience ahead of COP26](#)

The UK has today (Saturday 12 December) set out the UK's approach to prepare for the effects of climate change at home and support those facing impacts overseas, fulfilling a key commitment of the Paris Agreement.

In becoming one of the first countries in the world to publish its plans – known as an Adaptation Communication – the UK is setting out how it is enhancing resilience to our changing climate.

This comes as the UK today brings countries together for the Climate Ambition Summit, marking the fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement, and mobilising action ahead of COP26 in Glasgow next year.

The Adaptation Communication will be submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), alongside the UK's enhanced Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and the UK's Biennial Finance Communication. Together, these set out the UK's commitments under the three pillars of the Paris Agreement – mitigation, adaptation and climate finance.

Rebecca Pow, Environment Minister, said:

The impacts of climate change demand urgent action, and we are determined to be global leaders. We must adapt to these impacts at

home and overseas. That is why the UK is fulfilling a key commitment of the Paris Agreement and asking others to do the same both at today's Climate Ambition Summit, and ahead of COP26 in Glasgow next year as we come together for our planet.

We can't rest on our laurels, which is why, as well as implementing the bold actions set out today, we're developing a long-term vision and framework to help us ensure resilience to climate risk up to 2050 and beyond.

The UK's International Champion on Adaptation and Resilience for the COP26 Presidency, Anne-Marie Trevelyan, said:

We must act now to ensure our communities and economies are resilient to the climate shocks which are coming. From floods to droughts, to rising sea levels and wildfires, we need to be better prepared both at home and overseas to protect lives and livelihoods. We need to make sure those most vulnerable, especially women and girls, are at the forefront of our planning and investment as a world.

The UK is committed to supporting those countries most vulnerable to climate change impacts, whilst taking strong action to prepare at home. Our ambitious plan published today sends a clear signal that the UK is putting adaptation at the heart of its domestic and international climate action and we want to see all countries doing the same ahead of the COP26 climate summit next year.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency and the UK Commissioner to the Global Commission on Adaptation, said:

An increase in the impacts of the climate emergency, like heatwaves and floods, is already happening. The global race to net zero is essential to limit their rise, but if we don't prepare for new extremes we're on a hiding to nothing. We also need a race to resilience.

There are social and economic opportunities in helping communities improve resilience. We must invest in traditional infrastructure, like flood walls and early warning systems, but we are increasing our use of nature based solutions to manage water and reach net zero at the same time. We set out our approach in our pioneering Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy, which we are sharing with international partners ahead of COP26.

The UK's action to adapt to the effects of climate change is integrated across government departments, covering the natural environment, infrastructure, people and the built environment, business and industry, and

local government. Examples include:

- putting nature at the heart of its approach to adaptation and resilience, including committing £640 million through the Nature for Climate Fund to protect, restore, and expand habitats like woodlands and peat bogs. It also means supporting climate mitigation and adaptation through natural carbon capture and helping to alleviate flooding. The Green Recovery Challenge Fund has brought forward £80 million in these funds to kickstart a programme of nature-based solutions, and create and retain jobs in the conservation sector.
- ensuring that climate science and research, such as the UK Climate Projections 2018, are fully integrated into planning and decision making, including on major infrastructure.
- building resilience to flooding and coastal change with a [long-term flood policy statement](#) and [Environment Agency strategy](#) which set out a roadmap to create a nation more resilient to future flood and coastal erosion risk. This has been accompanied by record funding of £5.2 billion for new flood and coastal defences between 2021 and 2027.

Alongside delivering adaptation at home, the UK is also helping countries on the frontline of climate change adapt and build resilience to its effects, by:

- doubling our International Climate Finance (ICF) contribution to £11.6 billion between 2021-2026. This builds on the support UK ICF has provided, to help 66 million people around the world cope with the effects of climate change.
- supporting the international Risk-informed Early Action Partnership (REAP) which aims to make one billion people safer from disasters by 2025 through integrated disaster risk management and climate adaptation laws, health and social protection for populations, and improved early warning systems.
- spearheading changes to adaptation and resilience financing, for example through the Coalition for Climate Resilient Investment and the LIFE AR programme, which will enable the least developed countries to direct at least 70% of climate finance flows to support local level adaptation and resilience actions by 2030.
- promoting international cooperation, with a Call for Action on Adaptation and Resilience which has been endorsed by 120 countries and 86 institutions and provides a commitment to create the environment, partnerships, and political leverage for countries to take action on adaptation.
- emphasising the importance of nature-based solutions in adaptation and resilience across the globe, through the Leaders' Pledge for Nature and government-to-government dialogue to bring effective action on sustainable land use and commodities.

[Read the full Adaptation Communication here.](#)

Sustainable fuels to power RAF jets

Aircraft including F-35s, Typhoons and Wildcat helicopters currently use conventional fuel, but could use up to 50 per cent sustainable sources in the future, after MOD's changed aviation fuel standards came into effect in November 2020.

Known as 'drop-ins,' sustainable fuel sources include hydrogenated fats and oils, wood waste, alcohols, sugars, household waste, biomass and algae.

As aviation currently accounts for nearly two thirds of fuel used across defence, the new standards will lead to a significant reduction in emissions and improve defence's carbon footprint.

It is estimated that by substituting 30 per cent of conventional fuel with an alternative source in a jet travelling 1,000 nautical miles could reduce CO2 emissions by 18 per cent.

As well as cutting emissions, using diverse and readily available materials such as household waste including packaging, grass cuttings and food scraps will prevent waste being sent to landfill.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

"The UK is leading the way in sustainability and by refining our aviation fuel standards we are taking simple yet effective steps to reduce the environmental footprint of defence.

"As we strive to meet this Government's Net Zero carbon emissions target by 2050, it is right that we step up to spearhead these positive changes across both military and civilian sectors."

Today the UK is co-hosting the Climate Ambition Summit with the UN and France, where more than 70 world leaders will make bold commitments to cut emissions, fund climate finance and adapt to climate change ahead of COP26 in Glasgow next year.

The MOD's move to allow up to 50 per cent sustainable fuel marks a huge shift in global fuel consumption and opens the door for thousands of civilian and military aircraft to be fuelled with Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAFs).

Not only do Australia and several NATO countries rely on the UK's standards to influence what fuel they use, but civil and commercial airlines in the UK follow the defence standard as there is no commercial equivalent.

UK suppliers are also more likely to offer the same standard for commercial aircraft if they are already developing and importing sustainable fuel to supply defence. The Compania Logistica de Hidrocarburos-Pipeline System (CLH-PS), which is based in Madrid and provides fuel to several military airfields

as well as Heathrow, Gatwick, Manchester airports, has welcomed the MOD's new standards as an opportunity to pursue sustainable fuel use.

Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps said:

"Making all forms of transport more sustainable is critical if we are to meet our ambitious Net Zero target.

"From powering RAF Jets to the passenger planes which get us from A to B, sustainable fuels will play a huge part in decarbonising aviation and I'm excited to explore the possibilities as we make transport cleaner, greener and more efficient."

Luke Robbins, Commercial Director, CLH-PS said:

"CLH-PS welcomes the announcement by MOD to begin accepting sustainable aviation fuel blends, which will allow use of SAF in the UK's critical pipeline infrastructure and downstream distribution network.

"As part of CLH's sustainability strategy we are committed to contributing to the growth of SAF in particular and this change will enable us to work with our partners, including the MOD, to facilitate its wider use in the UK aviation market."

Lieutenant General Richard Wardlaw OBE, Chief Defence Logistics and Support said:

"The Defence Strategic Fuels Authority has been working tirelessly with industry partners to change the Defence Standard for Aviation Fuel, allowing SAF deliveries to the MOD. This is a significant change for Defence, enabling us to take a key step towards reducing our CO2 footprint, consistent with our wider ambition for achieving NZ50. And this is only the beginning.

"With the Defence Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy, due for release later this year, we are at the start of a journey to adopt a range of greener policies and new greener technologies, so that we can reduce our environmental impact while enhancing our operational capabilities."

Adopting greener technology in the MOD's aircraft fleet is part of the department's strategy to reduce its contributions to carbon and greenhouse gas emissions. Measures like this will be reflected in the department's ongoing Climate Change and Sustainability Review, led by Lt Gen Richard Nugee.

The review will focus on a range of initiatives from the MOD's NZ50 strategy to setting the right baseline for defence's emissions and carbon footprint, with findings set to be published in early 2021.

First wave of targeted Tier 3 community testing initiatives announced

- First 67 local authorities confirmed to start community testing programmes as part of government's COVID-19 Winter Plan
- More than 1.6 million rapid-turnaround lateral flow tests will be immediately deployed to detect asymptomatic cases and drive down transmission in highest risk areas
- Over 100 local authorities are expected to run programmes in the new year
- Taken together with existing restrictions, community testing will help put Tier 3 areas on a route out of toughest restrictions

The first wave of Tier 3 areas to receive the government's community testing offer have been confirmed today. When combined with existing measures, this will help put Tier 3 areas on a route out of the toughest restrictions.

Over 100 local authorities are engaged in the community testing programme with more rollouts due to begin in the new year.

Roughly one in three people have the virus without symptoms so could be spreading the disease without knowing it. Broadening testing to identify those showing no symptoms will mean finding positive cases more quickly, and break chains of transmission.

With its targeted approach, community testing aims to reduce the prevalence of the virus in the highest risk areas. Based on their in-depth knowledge of their local community, local authorities have created community testing plans, taking into account detailed prevalence data and demographics.

These include:

- Oldham will start increasing access to rapid testing for coronavirus. The initial plan will focus on those communities most significantly affected by the virus, higher risk supported living settings, health and social care staff, schools and colleges.
- Lancashire plans to start testing with large manufacturing sites, and businesses with workforces greater than 200, as well as more vulnerable groups.
- Kirklees plans to undertake whole borough community testing starting in areas of persistently high infection rates and targeting high risk workplaces.

More than 1.6 million lateral flow tests will be immediately delivered for use in December with many more to follow.

Government support will be provided to support community testing programmes for a minimum of 6 weeks, with more Tier 3 local authorities due to join the

community testing offer over the coming weeks and into 2021.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

I am really pleased to announce the first areas embarking on enhanced community testing programmes – after the successful work in Liverpool. With one in three people with coronavirus showing no symptoms, increased community testing is a vital additional tool at our disposal to help identify those who are infected and infectious, but unaware that they might be spreading the disease.

Community testing will be very important in helping the areas where levels of the virus are highest to drive down infection rates and ultimately will help areas ease tougher restrictions.

This is just the start, and we are working quickly to roll out community testing more widely as soon as more local teams are ready. I urge all those living in areas where community testing is offered to come forward and get tested.

General Sir Gordon Messenger, Chief of Operations, said:

We want to extend our thanks to the more than 100 local authorities who have engaged so quickly and comprehensively, allowing us to take forward the first stage of the community testing programme, and our operational team will begin to roll these out from as early as next week.

We continue to work extensively with Local Authorities on their proposals to expand the programme to more areas over the coming weeks and months, increasing testing services available to communities.

Local authorities can bid for this additional testing and support capability on an ongoing basis, enabling them to create a bespoke testing programme for their community, using a model of local delivery supported by central resource.

Community testing builds on the nearly 1.5 million lateral flow test kits which have already been delivered to 90 local authorities across all levels of tier restrictions to date, through the [Directors of Public Health programme](#). Extensive clinical evaluation has been carried out on the lateral flow tests by Public Health England and the University of Oxford which show these tests are accurate and sensitive enough to be used in the community.

Asymptomatic testing works hand in hand with the existing PCR testing service for those with COVID-19 symptoms as part of the comprehensive NHS Test and Trace testing offer. With over 700 test centres across the country, including 79 drive-through sites, 386 local test sites, 20 satellite test sites, 258

mobile testing units, and home testing, the average distance a person travels to visit a test site is now just 2.3 miles.

The government's [COVID-19 Winter Plan](#) sets out ambitious steps to drive down transmission of the virus, reduce its prevalence and so reduce the number of deaths and serious illnesses. Alongside the vaccine rollout which has now begun, tiering restrictions, and investment in NHS capacity, continued developments in our testing programme make it possible to reduce cases in the areas where the need is greatest.

The list of LAs that have submitted proposals and have an ambition to begin testing in December are listed below.

The community testing offer remains open to all LAs in Tier 3.

List of local authorities

- Amber Valley
- Bolsover
- Chesterfield
- Derbyshire Dales
- North East Derbyshire
- South Derbyshire
- Darlington
- Stockton on Tees
- Ashford
- Canterbury
- Dartford
- Dover
- Folkestone and Hythe
- Gravesham
- Maidstone
- Sevenoaks
- Swale
- Thanet
- Tonbridge and Malling
- Tunbridge Wells
- Medway
- Blackburn with Darwen
- Blackpool
- Burnley
- Chorley
- Fylde
- Hyndburn
- Lancaster
- Pendle
- Preston
- Ribble Valley
- Rossendale
- South Ribble
- West Lancashire
- Wyre

- Bolton
- Bury
- Manchester
- Oldham
- Rochdale
- Salford
- Stockport
- Tameside
- Trafford
- Wigan
- Barnsley
- Bradford
- Kirklees
- Birmingham
- Dudley
- Sandwell
- Cannock Chase
- East Staffordshire
- Lichfield
- Newcastle-under-Lyme
- South Staffordshire
- Stafford
- Staffordshire Moorlands
- Tamworth
- Stoke-on-Trent
- North Warwickshire
- Nuneaton and Bedworth
- Rugby
- Stratford-on-Avon
- Warwick
- Wolverhampton
- Solihull

Decision on local authorities selected to receive support immediately to start community testing based on the local infection rate, readiness of their plans, and other logistical and commercial considerations to ensure testing delivers the best possible value for money.

Anyone with one or more of these symptoms – a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste – should [book a test at nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus) or by calling 119.