

[The UK's role in defending media freedom](#)

World news story

The Minister for South Asia, Commonwealth and United Nations at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Office (FCDO), Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, reflected on the UK's leadership in defending media freedom.



The Minister for South Asia, Commonwealth and United Nations, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, attended the International Bar Association's 'Virtually Together' Conference, that followed the successful Canada-Botswana led Global Media Freedom Conference last week.

Lord Ahmad thanked the High Level Panel at the International Bar Association's 'Virtually Together' Conference for their work to defend media freedom and welcomed their report on providing refuge to journalists at risk. "Your work to tackle those who seek to intimidate the press is vital", he said.

Published 24 November 2020

[CMA takes swift action in bipolar drug investigation](#)

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) [launched a competition law investigation](#) into Essential Pharma last month because of suspicions that the firm may have abused its dominant position by proposing to withdraw the supply of bipolar drug, Priadel, to UK patients. If Priadel was withdrawn, this would require patients to switch to alternative, more expensive

treatments such as Camcolit, which is also owned by Essential Pharma.

Following the opening of the CMA's investigation, Essential Pharma paused the withdrawal of Priadel and entered into price negotiations with the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC). This has resulted in a recent agreement with the DHSC on a revised price for Priadel that is still lower than alternative bipolar drugs.

Essential Pharma has now also offered formal commitments to the CMA to address competition concerns regarding its strategy in relation to Priadel. These proposed commitments would last for 5 years and include continuing to supply Priadel on terms agreed with the DHSC. It would mean that the company cannot threaten to withdraw Priadel in order to increase the price without good reason.

The CMA's preliminary view is that the proposed commitments meet its competition concerns and is now seeking views from others before accepting them formally. If accepted, the commitments will bring the investigation to an end.

Medical bodies and charities had voiced significant concerns over patients having to switch bipolar medication, which can be a lengthy and complicated process and can ultimately lead to serious health implications. The proposed withdrawal would have also seen the NHS' costs increase significantly, at a time when it faces unprecedented pressure due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Ann Pope, the CMA's Senior Director of Antitrust, said:

Since the CMA intervened just last month, Essential Pharma has agreed to carry on supplying Priadel at a price agreed with the DHSC, which we hope will give peace of mind to the thousands of patients who rely on it.

We will carefully consider any responses to the consultation on the proposed commitments offered by Essential Pharma before reaching our final decision, with the best protection for patients in mind.

The CMA is inviting stakeholders to submit any comments on the commitments by 9 December 2020, before it reaches its final decision on whether or not to accept them.

The investigation by the CMA is ongoing and no decision has been made as to whether the law has been broken. However, if the commitments are accepted by the CMA, they will become legally binding, which means Essential Pharma cannot choose to retract them.

More information can be found on the CMA's [investigation into supply of lithium-based medication case page](#).

Notes to editors

1. The CMA opened the investigation as it has reasonable grounds for suspecting that Essential Pharma may have infringed the Chapter II prohibition of the Competition Act 1998/Article 102 of the TFEU.
2. The Chapter II prohibition of the Competition Act 1998 /Article 102 of the TFEU prohibit the abuse of a dominant position by one or more undertakings which may affect trade within the UK/EU or a part of it.
3. The prices agreed on by Essential Pharma and DHSC for Priadel are £7.50 for 200mg tablets per pack and £8.50 for 400mg tablets per pack. This is significantly less than the price of Camcolit, which is £48.18 per pack of 400mg tablets.
4. A business under investigation by the CMA may offer commitments to address the CMA's competition concerns. If the CMA accepts the proposed commitments to solve its competition concerns, it will not make finding as to whether that business breached the competition law or impose a fine.
5. If the CMA does not accept the proposed commitments, the investigation will revert to the CMA's standard procedure, which may lead to the CMA issuing a statement of objections in due course and imposing a financial penalty on a company if it is found to have infringed competition law.
6. Various medical bodies and charities signed the following letter to Matt Hancock: [letter to Matt Hancock, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, on the proposed withdrawal of Priadel](#)
7. For media enquiries, contact the CMA press office on 020 3738 6460 or press@cma.gov.uk.

[COP26 carrying the hopes of the world: Laura Clarke](#)

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā iwi, e rau rangatira mā, tēnā koutou katoa.

It's fair to say that 2020 has been a tumultuous year. There is such a rich menu of things to worry about, that it's sometimes hard to know where to start.

But I always like talking with businesses, innovators and investors: perhaps of all sectors you are, by necessity, the most forward looking: not dwelling on the problems, but looking ahead to trends, threats and opportunities,

finding solutions, and charting the best way forward.

And I hope that over the last two days you been able to do just that. Discuss and share ideas on how to build the urgency and momentum needed for rapid and substantial decarbonisation, and to ensure we build back better.

My talk is on 'carrying the hopes of the world – COP26'.

Because although things look bleak, there is cause for hope. And there is an opportunity here.

And I would suggest that the opportunity for Governments, businesses, investors, innovators and private capital is to set ourselves on the greenest trajectory possible.

So I'm going to start bleak, and talk first of all about the challenges posed by COVID-19, and the risk it poses to our efforts to tackle climate change.

Then I will try to bring us round to the opportunities: to the UK's Presidency of COP, the big UN Climate Change conference happening in Glasgow in November next year, to the opportunity to Build Back Better, or Build Forward as Christiana Figueres put it, from COVID-19. And then to the implications for us all here today.

COVID-19

The impact of COVID-19 on lives and livelihoods around the world has been staggering. 50 million cases, 1.26 million deaths, no country left unscathed by the economic impact.

But the impacts are even more devastating in the developing world. The World Bank now assesses that COVID-19 could push between 88 and 115 million people into extreme poverty in 2020.

COVID-19 will lead to greater instability in some places, and in others will strengthen the strongman. It will strengthen those who cast issues such as human rights, freedom from surveillance, freedom of the media as optional extras or 'nice to haves'.

And there must also be a risk that the urgent climate action that is needed falls into that same bracket of 'nice to have' 'non-essential', or that we can't afford it.

But we can't afford to think that way. Because COVID is the storm, but climate change is the weather. As humans we will come through this pandemic, but we only have one planet.

And that planet is in distress. The world is getting warmer, sea levels are rising, pollution is costing lives and biodiversity is collapsing. No country, business or individual will be left unscathed.

Build back better

So COVID-19 risks are distracting us from tackling climate change.

But there is an opportunity, too. This year has seen an unprecedented change: accelerating the ascendance of e-commerce over bricks and mortar retail, the rise of distance learning and e-health, the transformations of supply chains from being global and just-in-time to local and resilient.

COVID-19 shows us quite how fast we can change our behaviours as Governments, businesses and individuals when there's a compelling need to do so. And as Minister Shaw said yesterday, it has shown us how much we need to follow the science.

As Governments everywhere are planning for economic recovery, we have the opportunity to follow the science and build back better.

The choice is between making environmental sustainability and resilience the lens through which we plot our recovery, or locking-in a high carbon trajectory.

And as we borrow against our children's future, we need to ensure we have their interests at heart.

If we don't, we risk being on the wrong side of history as Governments, businesses parents.

57% of people voted for Labour and Green in this last election, up from 36% the election previously. Obviously there were many factors at play but climate and environmental issues clearly loomed large.

51% of students at Victoria University voted Green. Right now young people around the world are organising a virtual 'mock COP26', because of the need for urgency in tackling climate change.

These are future leaders, customers, consumers.

And they care about supply chains, about work conditions, about environmental impacts.

COP Presidency

And that brings me to the UK's Presidency of the 26th sitting of the United Nations Conference of Parties which will take place in Glasgow in November next year.

12 December marks five years on from signing the Paris Agreement, which was ratified in record time by countries determined to tackle climate change head on. Yet, the current 'emissions gap', or global emissions that aren't included in Nationally Determined Contributions or country-level emissions plans, is equivalent to the collective emissions of China, India, the US, EU and Russia.

We are delighted by recent announcements by China, Japan and the Republic of Korea on their net zero commitments, and pleased that President-elect Biden has said that the US will re-join the Paris Agreement.

And it is clear to all that there is still a lot to be done.

That is why, hosting in partnership with Italy, we will use our COP Presidency to push for greater ambition around the world:

- ambition to reduce emissions
- ambition to build resilience
- ambition to cooperate and support each other in a green recovery

To demonstrate that ambition we want countries to submit more ambitious country-level plans that include zero emissions targets, and to aim to do that as soon as possible, to keep global warming well below two degrees.

The UK will submit its own ambitious Nationally Determined Contribution, to complement our net zero commitment, well ahead of COP26, and we welcome the fact that New Zealand's NDC is being assessed by the Climate Change Commission in line with the 1.5 degree target.

But as well as NDCs, we want all countries to help speed up progress, in five key areas 'in the real world':

1. In clean energy, we need to embrace low-cost, zero-emissions technologies. We need to shift away from fossil fuels and invest in innovative, clean technologies.
2. In resilience, we need to help communities adapt to the worst effects of climate change, through resilient 'green' infrastructure and sustainable agriculture systems and supply chains.
3. In nature, we need to safeguard ecosystems and protect natural habitats. We can scale up nature-based solutions and green our supply chains. Nature can provide up to 30% of the required mitigation. New Zealand's Jobs for Nature package is a key example of this sort of activity.
4. In transport, we need to bring forward the date when zero-emissions vehicles will be not only cleaner than petrol and diesel but also cheaper. We know that New Zealand has one of the highest per capita road transport pollution levels, and the UK also struggles with road freight: this ought to be a low-hanging fruit for both of us.
5. The fifth area is finance which will underpin all these endeavours – investment that needs to be 'future proofed' – green and sustainable. It can't all come down to the public sector either, we need to mobilise flows of private finance into clean sectors. It is not a lack of capital

that is impeding our progress, but how we deploy it.

The other 'real world' push is the Race to Zero Coalition, which I would urge you to join. This initiative, which was launched in June, and which Professor Rockstrom spoke about yesterday, mobilises a coalition of leading net zero initiatives, representing 452 cities, 22 regions, 1,101 businesses, 45 of the biggest investors, and 549 universities.

These 'real economy' actors join 120 countries in the largest ever alliance committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 at the latest. Collectively these actors now cover nearly 25% global CO2 emissions and over 50% GDP. And the coalition has a critical role to play in pushing for more ambition.

UK Leadership

Let me talk briefly about the UK and how we are driving a clean recovery at home and around the world.

1. We are investing the equivalent of over NZ\$ 5.5 billion into improving the energy efficiency of homes and public buildings.
2. We have committed almost NZ\$2 billion in the transition to electric vehicles.
3. We are putting over NZ\$1.2 billion towards protecting natural habitats.
4. We are investing NZ\$10 billion in bolstering our own resilience through flood and coastal defences.
5. We have committed to doubling our international climate finance contribution to NZ\$22 billion over the period 2021 to 2025, to support other countries in making the transition.
6. On Tuesday the UK issued the first ever Sovereign Green Bond to help finance projects that will support the transition to a green economy.
7. And the UK will become the first country in the world to make Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) aligned disclosures fully mandatory across the economy by 2025, going beyond the 'comply or explain' approach. We followed NZ's lead on this, as James said yesterday. But we went further: bringing every company into the policy.

At the heart of all of this is how we value things. We need a conceptual shift in how we assess value.

We need to put climate change at the heart of all financial decisions, and we need to ascribe nature the value it deserves. Because the focus on the bottom line, the quick buck, the cheapest products doesn't work.

Consider the Amazon. The whole world depends on it, yet its value barely registers. Financial incentives that destroy forests outstrip incentives to protect them by 40:1. Although these are our world's lungs, they are worth more dead than alive.

So the UK is attempting to place a value on nature. Last year, HM Treasury led a [global review of the Economics of Biodiversity](#), which explored the

sustainability of our engagements with Nature, and what we must do differently to enhance our collective wealth and well-being, and that of our descendants.

The New Zealand Government is also leading the way, with its well-being economics, and well-being budget measuring not just output and growth, but the impact on individuals' well-being and the environment. That is all about the conceptual shift of how we value things.

And it's great to see that New Zealand's sustainable finance road map includes a recommendation that the well-being framework is used to guide investment decisions.

It is fantastic that over 100 Chief Executives in New Zealand have made pledges on reporting and reducing emissions through the Climate Leaders Coalition. Their companies collectively represent 60% of NZ emissions across all sectors. And we welcome New Zealand's leadership on climate related financial disclosures and hope you can encourage further ambition on this front, both domestically and internationally.

Individual businesses in the UK and New Zealand, for example Unilever, BP, Westpac and Warehouse, are making this conceptual shift, factoring in carbon pricing, climate related risks, supply chains, reputation, customer preference.

And there are early mover advantages on all of these things. Far better to be an early mover than to miss the (electric) bus.

And as we negotiate the UK-NZ Free Trade Agreement – we've just completed Round Two – NZ and the UK have a shared ambition to be early movers on using trade policy to advance our environmental and sustainability goals, and support the shift to a green economy. Bringing together New Zealand's track record in innovating in trade policy, and the UK's scale and global reach, and setting the standard for the greenest ever FTA.

Conclusion

I love New Zealand dearly. The way you innovate, the way you bat above your average. The way we share values, ambition, humour.

But there is also a gap – if you'll forgive me for saying it, as a friend, and someone who has married one of your own – between ambition and reality. You have Scandinavian ambitions in terms of quality of life and public services, but a US attitude to tax. The brand 100% Pure New Zealand lulled many into a false sense of security, when the environmental reality is far more challenging.

I remember PM Ardern, late last year, being asked what her vision was for New Zealand. She said: "I want us to be the country that we already think we are".

Businesses can close that gap, can turn ambition into reality. In the UK we have demonstrated it is possible to decouple emissions from economic growth –

growing our economy by over two thirds, while reducing emissions by 40%. Some of that is government policy and investment, of course, but lots of it is thanks to business – leading, innovating, showing the way.

So my challenge to you, as you leave this conference and go back to the day job, is how you will show leadership.

- Can you commit to reach zero emissions in the 2040s or sooner?
- Can you commit to publish a plan for how to achieve your target?
- Can you commit to report progress?

Will you join the Race to Zero coalition? Nigel Topping, High Level Champion for COP26, has challenged us to get 1000 organisations in New Zealand signed up to Race to Zero. So far we have two. They're a good two – Auckland Council and Toitū envirocare – but we have further to go!

And what else can you do as businesses, innovators, leaders? Because it is no longer a question of whether we will decarbonise the economy but how fast we can do it.

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tatou katoa.

[Green industrial revolution in sight as government sets out plans for more clean energy](#)

- Government sets out next step towards green industrial revolution as plans for next round of renewables support scheme published
- aims to deliver up to double amount of renewable energy from previous round and lower costs for consumers alongside plans to support UK manufacturers
- follows Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan to create 250,000 new green jobs, tackle climate change and build back greener from coronavirus

The government has set out its next steps towards a green industrial revolution with ambitious plans for the next round of its flagship renewables support scheme.

The fourth round of the Contracts for Difference (CfD) scheme – to open in late 2021 – will aim to double the capacity of renewable energy compared to the last round and expand the number of technologies supported, with offshore wind, onshore wind, solar, tidal and floating offshore wind projects all eligible to bid.

This will be coupled with a new consultation looking at the supply chain and

ways to support more jobs and private investment by increasing the competitiveness of UK manufacturers. It will mean the country can reap the rewards of clean energy following the Prime Minister's [Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution](#) published last week.

Energy Minister Kwasi Kwarteng said:

The UK is a world leader in clean energy, with over a third of our electricity now coming from renewables. That huge achievement is thanks to the government's Contracts for Difference scheme.

The new plans set out today build on the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan and put us firmly on the path towards building a new, green industrial revolution.

The CfD scheme is the government's primary method of supporting low-carbon electricity. It encourages investment in renewable energy by providing projects with a stable income, while protecting consumers from paying increased costs when electricity prices are high.

The fourth round aims to increase the capacity of renewable energy from the 5.8GW achieved in the last round to up to 12GW, which could be enough to power 20 million electric cars on the UK's roads in any year.

Government support to unleash the potential of offshore wind generation has seen the cost of it fall by two thirds in the last 5 years. Given its long-term potential to support the country's 2050 net zero target, offshore wind projects will compete in their own 'pot' in the next auction process rather than against other technologies as they have previously.

Last year's third round delivered record-low prices and secured enough clean energy to power over 7 million homes. Today's plans set out changes to the structure of the scheme to build on that success.

Floating offshore wind projects will be able to bid for contracts for the first time, allowing wind farms to be built further away from the shoreline where it is windiest and increasing the UK's renewable energy capacity even further.

And [as announced in March](#), solar and onshore wind projects will be able to bid for the first time since 2015, coupled with a commitment to update guidance for new onshore wind schemes in England to fully reflect the impacts and benefits to local communities.

Following the [first consultation on the fourth CfD round](#), the government has also announced today (24 November 2020) that a second consultation is being launched on [new proposals for the Supply Chain Plan](#).

The proposals are designed to increase the clarity, ambition and measurability of commitments made by renewable project developers when they bid for contracts in the CfD scheme, and to introduce new measures if they

subsequently fail to deliver on those commitments.

Today's announcement follows last week's unveiling of the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan, which outlines an ambitious vision of a low-carbon future for the UK, and will ensure that clean energy continues to play a key role in ending our contribution to climate change entirely by 2050.

- read the [consultation response](#)
- the fourth round will see three 'pots' for renewables technologies:
 - Pot 1: Established technologies – including onshore wind and solar PV
 - Pot 2: Less-established technologies – including floating offshore wind, Advanced Conversion Technologies and tidal stream
 - Pot 3: Offshore wind
- former coal-burning power stations that have been converted to biomass generation will be excluded from future CfD rounds
- Contracts for Difference are 15-year private law contracts between renewable electricity generators and the Low Carbon Contracts Company (LCCC), a government-owned company that manages CfDs at arm's length from government
- contracts are awarded in a series of competitive auctions, known as allocation rounds, which have been run every 2 years. In the auction process, the lowest price bids are successful, which drives efficiency and cost reduction
- CfDs give greater certainty and stability of revenues to electricity generators by reducing their exposure to volatile wholesale prices, while protecting consumers from paying for higher costs when electricity prices are high
- the scheme has delivered substantial new investment and helped deliver significant reductions in the costs of capital for some renewable technologies
- the third round of the CfD renewable energy auction delivered record-low prices on enough clean energy to power over 7 million homes
- in the fourth allocation round of CfD, the government's aim is to support up to double the capacity of renewable energy from levels achieved in the third round, rising from 5.8GW in AR3 to up to 12GW in AR4
- following the conclusion of the third CfD Allocation Round in September 2019, the scheme currently supports 49 renewable electricity projects (73 CfDs) across a range of technologies, totalling around 15.5 GW

[Test to Release: England introduces testing strategy for international](#)

arrivals

- testing strategy for passengers arriving into England to be introduced from 15 December
- 14-day self-isolation period reduced by up to two thirds on receipt of a negative COVID-19 test from a private provider after 5 days of isolation
- new funding committed to support commercial airports across England as they recover from the COVID-19 pandemic

Passengers arriving into England will be able to reduce mandatory self-isolation by at least a week, as the government launches its new strategy for testing international arrivals.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps has today (24 November 2020) announced that from 15 December 2020, passengers arriving into England from countries not featured on the government's [travel corridor list](#) will have the option to take a test after 5 days of self-isolation, with a negative result releasing them from the need to isolate.

The move will give passengers the confidence to book international trips in the knowledge that they can return home and isolate for a shorter period if they have received a negative test. With those opting in to the scheme having to book and pay for a coronavirus (COVID-19) test from a private provider on the GOV.UK list, we are ensuring the NHS Test and Trace testing capacity is protected.

Under the 'Test to release for international travel' strategy, passengers arriving into England by plane, ferry or train should book their test before they travel; must complete a [passenger locator form](#); and will still need to self-isolate for 5 days before taking a test – rather than taking it at their port of arrival.

Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, said:

We have a plan in place to ensure that our route out of this pandemic is careful and balanced, allowing us to focus on what we can now do to bolster international travel while keeping the public safe.

Our new testing strategy will allow us to travel more freely, see loved ones and drive international business. By giving people the choice to test on day 5, we are also supporting the travel industry as it continues to rebuild out of the pandemic.

The 'Test to Release' scheme is announced as the government introduces new financial support for English airports and ground handlers serving them. This support, which will shore up jobs and reinforce local economies, will be available to commercial airports in England. The support will address fixed

costs and be equivalent to the business rates liabilities of each business, capped at up to £8 million per site, and subject to certain conditions. This scheme will open in the new year.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, said:

The aviation industry is vital to our economy – creating jobs and driving growth- which is why we have supported them throughout this crisis through the job retention scheme, loans and tax deferrals.

This new package of support for airports, alongside a new testing regime for international arrivals, will help the sector take off once again as we build back better from the pandemic.

The government has considered the evidence which demonstrates that a test after 5 days of self-isolation provides materially better results than just having a test on arrival, as it allows time for the virus, should it be present, to incubate, helping reduce the risk of a false negative result.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Matt Hancock, said:

Ensuring that safe travel is possible has been a priority for the [Global Travel Taskforce](#). This test on day 5 of the 14-day self-isolation period will identify positive coronavirus cases and allow those who test negative to return to work and see their loved ones while abiding by domestic coronavirus restrictions.

This will be done at the cost of the traveller to protect the capacity of NHS Test and Trace and ensure that any UK resident who has symptoms is able to get a test.

Passengers will be able to book a test from a provider on a GOV.UK list before arriving in England. If they choose to book a test, they will need to state this on their [passenger locator form](#) prior to arriving and then go straight into self-isolation at home as usual. If they choose to opt in after arrival, they will need to resubmit their passenger locator form.

They can then take a test on or after day 5 of the isolation period either at home or at a private provider's testing site, and on receipt of a negative result, can immediately finish self-isolating and return to following domestic rules.

Those choosing not to take a test when arriving from a non-exempt country must continue to follow the current [self-isolation requirements](#) (2 weeks).

The testing strategy is one outcome of the government's Global Travel Taskforce report recently presented to the Prime Minister, which also sets out a pathway to restarting the cruise sector.

The recommendations are based on advice from a consortium of expert representatives from the aviation, maritime, international rail, tourism and hospitality industries to boost international travel for all modes, whilst safeguarding public health in the UK.

The government will also continue to work with international partners and representatives across the transport industries to further build on the recommendations in the report, including exploring pre-departure testing pilots with partner countries on a bilateral basis.

COVID-19 has profoundly changed the nature of international travel. Travellers should always [check the latest advice from the FCDO](#).