

Environmental Audit Committee

Oral evidence: International Climate Negotiations: COP30, HC 1427

Wednesday 22 October 2025

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Members present: Mr Toby Perkins (Chair); Olivia Blake; Julia Buckley; Carla Denyer; Barry Gardiner; Sarah Gibson; Alison Griffiths; Chris Hinchliff; Dr Roz Savage; Blake Stephenson; Alison Taylor; John Whitby.

Questions 20 - 38

Witnesses

[II](#): Nigel Topping, Chair, Climate Change Committee.

Examination of witness

Witness: Nigel Topping.

Q20 Chair: Welcome back, everyone, to the second of today's three panels. We are very delighted to be joined by Nigel Topping, the chair of the Climate Change Committee. This is the first time that we have had you in front of us since your appointment, so congratulations very much indeed. I am hoping that it is living up to all your expectations.

Nigel Topping: And more.

Chair: Excellent. What more could be hoped for from a new job?

Turning to the purpose of today's important hearing into COP30, you have heard some of the evidence there from the ambassador. The relationship between the UK and Brazil is obviously very positive in terms of the UK's contribution towards COP30. We all expect the UK to be one of those more demanding countries going into COP30. Your role in statute is as an adviser to Parliament about the extent to which the UK Government is complying with its own legally defined commitment. From your perspective in that role, what do you think we, as Parliament, should be expecting from the UK delegation? Are there areas where you think we should be more demanding of the UK delegation if we are going to stay consistent with those legally binding commitments that we have?

Nigel Topping: I will start by saying that those legally binding commitments are very well represented in our international engagement through the NDC, which is of course based on advice from the Climate Change Committee. I think my foundational view would be that, in terms of representing that ambition and the process in statute, in debate, in refined statute, in the form of giving evidence and in the form of contemplating and committing legally to five-yearly budgets, it is pretty well understood, and of course it matches the five-year dynamic of the UNFCCC process.

The No. 1 thing for parliamentarians to represent is that that is in place and that it is strong. It is a model that we know many countries are very interested in and many have deliberately sought to learn from and copy or adapt. That would be the No. 1 thing: that our legal commitment to net zero by 2050 is in line with the Paris agreement, and our five-yearly domestic commitments, which are then expressed in the language of the UNFCCC and the NDCs, are also aligned with that, and they represent continued ratcheting of ambition and a responsibility not just to set the targets, but to be detailed about the path together.

Q21 Chair: Do you think there are things that the UK will be turning up to Belém with that will be disappointing, or is it purely a case of the UK turning up and asking everyone else to sign up to more ambitious things? Are there any areas where our own case is weak?



Nigel Topping: If I can draw on some of my other experience, obviously the Committee is largely domestically focused. But, as you know, I have been very involved in COPs for quite some time, since I led the We Mean Business Coalition in Paris, and then in my role as the high-level champion for COP26 and COP27, just reflecting more broadly. Given the context of some geopolitical headwinds internationally, I think the most important thing is the consistency message.

The UK, as you have heard from the ambassador, has lent strongly into areas of international collaboration. COP26 gave birth to quite a lot of those areas, both multilateral—in fact, more clubs of the willing than consensus-based, and if we talk about the process of the COP, we might come back to that—but also in the non-state actor realm, which is the realm that I was responsible for in Glasgow, and particularly the private sector and the real economy.

I think it is about making sure that we are telling the story not just of our role in the formal negotiations, but more broadly in international collaboration among countries and in promoting international collaboration among supply chains and private sector actors.

The area that is always most contentious in COPs is money. There is always a mixed message, or mixed news, in the context of fiscal tightening in many developed countries, including the UK, leading to reductions in aid budgets. That is a difficult backdrop, but I think it is one that, politically, is understood if it is based on pragmatism rather than ideology. The real issue there is to make sure we are leaning into ways of leveraging limited public finances to mobilise the much larger amounts of private finance that we need to bring to bear on this challenge. In that sense, the dynamic in the UK is similar. How do we unlock a lot of private finance to make a big transition? Because public finance will never be enough. That is just as true internationally as it is locally.

Q22 **Chair:** Do you think that the US position on climate change represents an opportunity for the UK to exercise greater influence? Could it be to our benefit, or is there more of a responsibility on the UK in that changing geopolitical context?

Nigel Topping: I think it definitely raises the responsibility, because US leadership—obviously, given the size of the economy and the international influence—has been huge when positive in the past, and is huge and negative now. You will have seen what happened in the IMO negotiations only last week, which is really regrettable. I think there is an opportunity to play a more central leadership role. My experience is that the UK is held in very high esteem in multilateral circles, and has been for some time—definitely since COP26, which was so well presided over by Lord Alok Sharma.

There are two aspects of leadership that I think are worth bearing in mind. One is that this consistency of policy signal is important in the UK in terms of a signal to markets that this is an investable policy



environment, because it has been consistent over multiple Governments over decades now. But that also sends a message to other countries about what is possible, and given that we know that the sum of all the NDCs will not add up to a net zero pathway, continuing to demonstrate leadership, not just through negotiations and targets, but through doing, is really important.

The other area that we should never forget is the central role of the City of London in international finance, and the tens of trillions of dollars that are starting to flow, and will need to flow, in terms of both mitigation and adaptation. In terms of the UK as a centre, and as a centre of innovation, and definitely if the US is going to take a step back, there is an opportunity for a competitive advantage in terms of taking more of a leadership role.

Q23 Chair: In terms of that consistency, you rightly allude to the fact that we have broadly had a political consensus on this over 20 years or so. Clearly, as His Excellency was alluding to, and not unlike in many other countries, that consensus is under threat. There are now suggestions of abolishing the Climate Change Act, which of course was what created your own committee. Do you think that that weakens the UK's hand? Does it strengthen the UK's hand because other countries know that consensus is under threat here, as it is elsewhere? How do you, and how should the UK Government, respond to that on the international stage?

Nigel Topping: Internationally, I think that people see some of the news from the UK about that weakening of political consensus and they are concerned. It depends what role you are in as to what concern you have. If you are trying to promote strong climate policies in your own country and you face political division, it is helpful to have a leading country where there is broad political consensus moving things forward across changes of Government. If you are in the private sector, it is a concern that somewhere that has been a really solid place where you could bank on consistency of policies might not be. The louder that noise gets, the more that becomes a current issue, because we are talking about investments made over 10, 20, 30 years sometimes.

We are a long way from any potential change of Government in terms of the normal electoral cycle. For parliamentarians engaging with this, it might be worth reminding concerned or interested international colleagues that we have a strong statutory process in place and that we have broad business support. Some of the statements from business leaders in response to recent suggestions that we dilute our collective ambition were very strong around the risk to competitiveness. We have strong citizen support, and still very broad political support when you look across the full spectrum of parties.

This would be an area where it would be important to be reassuring international colleagues that we are far from following the US down that particular cul-de-sac.



Q24 **Olivia Blake:** Mr Topping, what does leadership look like at COP in terms of actions that we can rely on to positively influence other parties? You clearly have a lot of experience of this. Do you have some concrete examples that you could point to?

Nigel Topping: I would split my answer between the formal process and the informal process, because the formal process is anchored in the NDCs, and there is much less to be negotiated now. Everybody in that process knows that the UK comes with a very strong NDC and, as we heard earlier, the UK and Brazil starting the whole cycle with strong NDCs was a very positive and important signal. Not all the entities that have come since or that are to come have matched that level of ambition, but we have seen some really positive moves from some big ones like China and India. Hopefully, we will see something from the EU that is very positive and broadly in line soon.

One of the important things for me about that UK-Brazil anchoring of the story for the next round of NDCs is that it also represents that really important principle in the multilateral process of common but differentiating responsibilities. These are two countries with very different circumstances, both coming forward with very ambitious NDCs, but not mirror images of each other, because they are very different countries in so many ways. That is foundational.

Then there is the UK involvement in some of the negotiating issues, and of particular importance are the tracks around finance. Myself and Mahmoud Mohieldin, the Egyptian champion, and the presidency, started the process of what now has become the Stern-Songwe-Bhattacharya report, from which we get this \$1.3 trillion figure. It is the international part of a \$3.2 trillion figure, with the \$1.9 trillion being domestic resource mobilisation. It is about continuing to move that agenda along and avoiding falling into the pitfall of the polarised politics, which sometimes rips the COPs apart and stops them being able to have practical problem-solving conversations, and then similarly trying to get to a more pragmatic place on language and plans for adaptation. Those would be in the formal negotiations.

Then, I think the Brazilian presidency has done a fantastic job in elevating the informal, what we call the action agenda. We did a lot in Glasgow, but I think this Brazilian presidency has done even more on that. It has very cleverly built on the formal process of a global stocktake, but then said we need this very broad mobilisation that is implementation focused; it is not about targets. I think it is about the UK engaging in every different forum that is relevant. A big part of that action agenda was built on the breakthrough agenda that came out of COP26. There are many British companies and financial institutions involved in different ways. Interestingly, there is a different dynamic, because those processes are not based on consensus politics, so they are much more able to be bold and more innovative, and the UK is involved in many of those.



- Q25 **Olivia Blake:** The UK has a track record of playing a leading role in the sectoral initiatives announced at previous COPs, as you outlined. Do the UK's financial contributions match the ambition shown by these announcements? You hinted at that in your last answer to the Chair. Do you think there are limitations at the moment?

Nigel Topping: The matter of fiscal limitations and international climate finance obviously is not a matter for the Climate Change Committee, but speaking with my former hat as a climate champion, my sense is that negotiators and politicians more broadly understand those fiscal and political realities. The NGOs may have a higher bar or a different bar, but in terms of international counterparts, the question is, "What are you doing within the gifts and the constraints that you have?" Everybody knows that you are not just negotiating across the table; you are also negotiating behind the table.

This goes back to the role of the City and UK financial institutions. For example, I remember that that in Glasgow any talk of the role of insurance, when we talked about loss and damage, was—well, not any talk, but I remember personally being attacked for saying that insurance had a role, as though this was a way of just trying to commercialise suffering. In fact, we know that insurance is one of the instruments that helps in development. It stabilises income; it spreads risk. We have seen coming out of the UK some of the most innovative thinking and collaborations on mobilising insurance ideas and insurance products as part of the suite of solutions to adaptation, loss and damage.

- Q26 **Olivia Blake:** That is very helpful. You have hinted at the political challenge, but what role do you think UK parliamentarians can play at COP30 and beyond?

Nigel Topping: Remember that the COP process is conceived of as a gathering of Environment Ministers negotiating a multilateral treaty, but of course everything lands in a local context. Every emission comes locally; every job is a local job. One of the most important roles of parliamentarians is helping the whole process in that translation from the sometimes rather abstract, formal consensus-based process to the reality of what it means on the ground. Of course "on the ground" can mean in the UK or in a constituency, or an anecdote from an individual constituent.

It is about building those bridges, because the process can sometimes get very esoteric, not deliberately, but just by virtue of the fact that it is quite esoteric and it can sometimes disappear behind closed walls in its pursuit of consensus in very contentious areas. We need to remind participants just how much progress we have made here: that we have reduced emissions by over 50% while growing our economy, and that we are on track—maybe not entirely on track, and I can come back to that with my Climate Change Committee hat on, but we have ongoing momentum—to continue that journey. It is about a combination of, "It is



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working on the ground” and “You can be bolder because we have been bold, and it has been just fine.”

Q27 Dr Savage: Thank you for coming in. It is fantastic that the UK has submitted this ambitious NDC for 2035 in line with the CCC’s advice, but there seems to be a gap between the target and the plan, and the plan and delivery. At the moment, only 38% of the emissions reductions required for the 2030 NDC are covered by actual plans. What needs to happen to bridge that gap between target and plan, and plan and reality?

Nigel Topping: As the Committee knows, part of our statutory obligation is to publish an annual progress report—progress against targets. I think the 38% figure will come from that report. The first thing to say is that we do not expect 100% of the emissions to be covered by plans with no risk. The number that we use is those we think are in the bag and those with low levels of risk. On that measure, 61% of emissions reductions are on track. It is still far from 100%, but it is a bit better than the 38%. The 38% we are very confident of; with 61%, it is confident or some risk. Given the uncertainty of doing anything in the future, that has some risk. That still leave 39% with high levels of risk or no plans.

The biggest remaining risk is not about our power system; that is perhaps the first thing to say. We have decarbonised our power system by 85% since 1990. The highest emitting sectors now are road transport. We are fairly confident with the transition to EVs. Then there is domestic heat and industrial. That transition to heat is our No. 1 concern right now. Then there is agriculture and land—forest and peatland, which have to be done soon. Particularly with forests, if you do not plant now, you do not get the benefit. You cannot plant 10 years later and get the benefit 11 years later, because trees take time to grow.

I would say it is heat, both domestic and industrial, and the key to that is addressing electricity prices. That has been our No. 1 piece of advice in progress reports to the last two Governments. It has been in our advice for a long time, but it has been an absolute No. 1. The last Government committed to do something about it, but did not have time to act on that. With this Government, we are very much looking forward to see what is in the warm homes plan and whether there is practical movement on taking some of the policy levies off electricity prices so that we rebalance electricity and gas. The four times more efficient technology of heat pumps is in the money from a market point of view, just like the three times more efficient electric vehicles are starting to be in the money from a commercial point of view. Heat pumps, forests and peatland would be the top issues to address in the short term.

Q28 Dr Savage: The big wins, yes. Thank you very much; that is very helpful. For the UK to credibly take a leadership role at COP30, bearing in mind that it is not very far away, what more should we be doing in terms of climate action domestically?



Nigel Topping: I think it is the same answer. The only thing I might add is to build on the great base we have in terms of the finance sector, and to maybe tell that story with a bit more pride. So much of what is happening internationally has its roots here in the UK. The ISSB disclosure standards started with an organisation called the Carbon Disclosure Project, which was launched on the steps of No. 10 in 2000, which led to the Climate Disclosure Standards Board, which led to the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures, which led to the ISSB. The IFRS, the body that houses the ISSB, is housed in London. We are an institutional home to much of the thinking and innovation. It is about telling the story of our mitigation journey and telling the story of our mobilising of finance.

The thing that we need to step up on is our clarity on adaptation action, and obviously Baroness Brown's Adaptation Committee, the committee that deals with that, will be issuing a big report next year. That is an area where both the UK and the world need to step up and get much more specific. I think we get a bit stuck in some of the esoteric language of the UNFCCC rather than the practical language of what needs to happen, what it will take to do it and who is going to do it.

Q29 **Dr Savage:** Have the projections for future electricity usage that are informing these plans factored in a likely explosion in the use of AI and the amount of electricity that that is going to use?

Nigel Topping: It is a very dynamic field. We laid our advice in February, so it is based on system modelling from the previous year. It would be worth a revisit is what I would say, because that is such a dynamic area. There is a hype cycle and there is a reality cycle. Obviously, our advice is in five-yearly cycles. One thing we are doing, taking advantage of having slightly less publication pressure at the moment, is to review some of the sensitivities, both cost and demand-wise, on some of the main issues. That is one of the things we will have a chance to look at in the next six months. If anything material comes out of that, we would share it with the Government and Parliament.

Dr Savage: We would be interested to see that. Thank you.

Q30 **Chair:** To bring you back to that issue of electricity prices, we are heading towards a Budget shortly. Governments often increase taxes on things they want to discourage and reduce taxes on things they want to encourage. What is your message to the Chancellor? Given that we want to increase electricity usage compared with gas and petrol cars, is it not mad that we have an additional tax on the very behaviour we want to encourage? With these green levies, which make electricity artificially more expensive here, we are seeming to tax the very thing that we are encouraging people to do more of.

Nigel Topping: Yes. The make-up of the electricity price is very complex, with many different slices. Some of those slices, effectively, subsidise innovation. Decisions were made—in some cases 20 years



ago—to kick-start. Yes, there is a very strong argument that putting innovation costs on bill payers is not a great way to incentivise the behaviour and economic development that we want. That is why our No. 1 piece of advice has been to remove some of the policy levies.

It is worth at least the thought experiment that reducing the price of electricity will have an effect on inflation, because I think electricity is 3.1% of the basket of goods. Reducing inflation would be good for consumer confidence. It would be good for investor and business confidence. It would also likely lead to a reduction in the cost of borrowing. All in all, there is a real question about, what are we trying to do with electricity prices? Are we trying to recoup all the costs through that measure? Or are we trying to send signals to the market that will drive decarbonisation, consumer and business confidence, and growth? We think it is the latter. That is why I said we are looking forward to seeing some of the policy measures due to be announced, to see concrete movement in that area.

Q31 Chair: I totally take your point there. We also recognise that the Chancellor has a Budget deficit and that she wants to raise more money, not less, in this Budget. If she were to reduce some of the levies and bring down the cost of electricity, where might she try to recoup that in the same field?

Nigel Topping: That is beyond our remit. That is more of an OBR point.

Chair: Give us an idea of the types of things she might consider.

Nigel Topping: One thing that would bear really serious investigation would be what the pass-through of that reduction in power prices mean macroeconomically for inflation and therefore the cost of borrowing. It seems that you can either get in a positive feedback loop, where you reduce the cost of electricity, reduce inflation, reduce the cost of borrowing and reduce interest costs, or you get stuck in a negative one, where you have high power costs, high inflation and high borrowing costs.

Remember that, tied in with that is that the transition from gas to electricity moves us away from dependence on volatile hydrocarbons. This country spent £100 billion propping up consumer bills as a result of the last gas crisis. That is 3% of the national debt in one cycle. The OBR calculates that a once-a-decade price spike by 2050 would add 13% to the national debt. That is because electricity prices follow gas prices. The more we move to fixed, stable, close-to-zero marginal price renewables, the more we remove that volatility and the energy insecurity, which is tied to that volatility. The first thing I would look at is whether we can look macroeconomically at the pass-through, rather than looking to add tax anywhere else.

Perhaps another area to look at is fair treatment of gas across its use in power and its use in heating. We have a carbon price on gas that is used



to generate electricity but not on gas that is used to generate heating. There is a distortion there in favour of gas for central heating, when we should be trying to move away from that. It needs to be handled sensitively because there are real distributional issues. We did a lot of distributional modelling; the advice for CB7 has a whole chapter on that, and we think that those considerations are very important. It is about not just reducing the cost of electricity, but getting the spark gap, or the ratio between electricity and gas, right. As I say, heat pumps are three to four times as efficient, so if the price of electricity is less than three to four times that of gas, the market will accelerate the transition.

Q32 Carla Denyer: That was interesting. I will take us back to thinking about COP for a moment. The Brazilian presidency has set out its desire for this COP to be more implementation focused, as opposed to just negotiation, and that mirrors your own comments to the then BEIS Committee four years ago, saying that we really need this first COP to be “about action”. What needs to be done to achieve that? Specifically, what could or should the UK Government do to help make this COP action focused?

Nigel Topping: I will take us back to COP26 because we tried a few things and succeeded in a few things there through this close relationship, both Government to Government, but also, for example, myself and my colleague, the then Chilean high-level champion, working with the Brazilian high-level champion to share some of our experiences, and collectively trying to build in the action area.

I have a couple of things. First, we should strongly recognise that the process has evolved to embrace clubs of the willing. Everyone knows it is a 100% consensus process, which sounds like a design for lack of progress—it certainly does not make innovation easy. In COP26 there was so much to be negotiated, we decided not to try to add more implementation elements into the negotiation—remember that the Paris rulebook was still being negotiated. But we did launch the breakthrough targets—this idea of very concrete sectoral targets. How many green steel plants do we need by 2030? What percentage of sustainable aviation fuel do we need by 2030? None of that is negotiated, and probably never could be on a consensus basis, but when you start having that language, you end up in COP28, only two years after Glasgow, with a large collective commitment to trebling renewables—not a consensus commitment, but outside of the negotiations process and, interestingly, including state actors and the private sector, the Global Renewables Alliance.

The No. 1 thing the UK could do would be to continue to support that dynamic. It has done a lot through the breakthrough agenda that came out of Glasgow and is involved in many things, and I know it has been working with the presidency to contribute its institutional knowledge and support to that process. That process allows us to have an ambition ratchet that is more tied to the real economy and does not suffer from being able to go only at the rate of the slowest or the least ambitious.



The UK Government could also help make sure that sectors of UK industry are lined up with some of those sectoral collaborations. It could also talk about how its own financial reforms are helping drive finance towards those transitions.

- Q33 Carla Denyer:** You will be aware that at COP the Just Transition Work Programme is deciding whether to establish the Belém action mechanism, which would embed fairness and a focus on better lives into the plans. As I understand it, at the moment the UK Government has not committed to backing that formally. Is that kind of thing important, perhaps us a personal view?

Nigel Topping: I am not familiar with the details of what is being negotiated, but I can say, both personally and from the point of view of the committee, that a just transition is really important. It is really about dialogue early. It is not about waiting for the announcement of the closure of a steel plant and then having the dialogue. It is about talking about that five or 10 years before, when we know it is coming because we know where the technology is going, and when there is time for the workforce, company management and the policy community to understand the complexities of a transition and put plans in place that allow people to make important decisions about their lives and their investments, without the volatility of waiting until the last minute and then flapping. Dialogue in good time is the key to all just transition.

Carla Denyer: I do not know if you deliberately basically paraphrased my Private Member's Bill but, yes, I agree.

- Q34 Chris Hinchliff:** Mr Topping, to return to adaptation, last year your committee said that our national adaptation to climate change "falls far short of what is needed". In April this year, your assessment said that adaptation progress is either "too slow...stalled, or...heading in the wrong direction" and you did "not find evidence to score a single outcome as 'good'". Your committee's letter to Minister Hardy, published this month, said we should now "at a minimum" prepare for 2° of warming, and even plan for 4 degrees of warming "by the end of the century". The implications of this in terms of risk to life, agricultural yields and displacement of peoples would of course be profound and, frankly, make our current problems pale in comparison. What outcomes do we need to see at COP30 to be on track to adapt to these challenges at a global and national level ?

Nigel Topping: Both internationally and nationally, political systems have struggled to put adaptation on an equal footing to mitigation, perhaps partly because for a long time the hope was that mitigation would be strong enough and fast enough to itself minimise the need to adapt. Also, undoubtedly, it is much easier to measure mitigation than adaptation. There is a truth to the saying that what gets measured gets managed, which unfortunately sometimes means that what is difficult to measure does not get managed. We did a lot of work on that in Glasgow, and—again with my climate champion hat on from the UN—in Sharm el-



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Sheikh at COP27, with the Egyptian presidency, launched the Sharm el-Sheikh adaptation agenda. This was not a negotiation.

I have to confess to being a bit confused about what is being negotiated on adaptation. It feels to me that it runs the risk of being almost impossible to negotiate something that you can action. You could put one figure on emissions because we have all the thinking of CO₂ equivalence. You cannot put one figure on adaptation. When we launched the race to resilience, we attempted to use lives and livelihoods made more resilient as a denominator, because that felt like something everybody could understand. Of course, how you actually measure that is still very challenging, but it is a narrative at least. The Sharm el-Sheikh adaptation agenda named 30 specific action tracks—again, very different, from clean cook stoves to microinsurance, from restoring mangroves to loss and damage funds. Every one of those has a totally different dynamic and totally different actors.

For me, the most important thing COP could do would be to be the trigger for really getting into implementation and not endless negotiation around committees. Then I would have hope that the focus on action in Brazil would allow us to lift adaptation and resilience actions into a much more pragmatic space. I fear it may be elusive in the multilateral consensus space.

Q35 Chris Hinchliff: If we, as the UK, want to continue to play a role of international leadership, can the Government wait until publishing the national adaptation programme 4 in 2028 to set out the necessary changes, or do we need to look at a new iteration of NAP 3 in the interim?

Nigel Topping: As you know, Baroness Brown's Adaptation Committee, as you referred to, will publish an extensive report next year. At the request of the Government, which we welcome, that will be much more action-oriented. I would not try to pre-empt what her sub-committee will say, and it will be a matter of timing, but there will be an opportunity for the Government to respond to that report substantively without necessarily doing a 3B plan. It is a bit of a pragmatic issue of whether it is worth doing an interim plan or whether it is just a question of moving on some of the early recommendations. I hope there will be an opportunity in this country to move into a much more substantive conversation about what we mean, and what the action tracks and targets are, so that we can measure our progress against those targets.

Q36 Chris Hinchliff: To take you on to a related point, I am sure you are aware of the press stories about the Joint Intelligence Committee's report that declining sustainability and biodiversity represent a fundamental risk in terms of spiralling food prices and indeed a profound threat to our national security. Would you agree that making this analysis public would be helpful to bring urgency to the need for adaptation to be put on an equal footing with mitigation, including internationally at COP30, and would you welcome this report's publication by the Government?



Nigel Topping: I am not familiar with the report. It sounds like there will be security considerations about what might be published, but I have two thoughts. One is that my experience is that the security community really understand the seriousness of climate change-related risk. The other would be that it is not always helpful to have mitigation and adaptation as two separate topics. Clearly, mitigation affects adaptation, and the arguments for the increasing need for adaptation can help motivate faster mitigation. That is, again, one of those things that has come out of the UN process that does not necessarily serve us well, and we might be better off thinking more holistically. Anything that helps raise understanding from credible sources of how just seriously we need to take this transition is always welcome.

Q37 **Chris Hinchliff:** May I push you slightly in a general sense? The concern in the press stories is that we are perhaps sticking our head in the sand about serious issues and avoiding talking about them. Would you agree that it is valuable for us as parliamentarians, and indeed for the wider public debate, that we have all the facts in front of us and do not shy away from them, even when they present difficult information?

Nigel Topping: Yes, certainly in that broad sense. Absolutely, I would agree with that.

Q38 **Chair:** I have one final question, Mr Topping. Ahead of COP30, the role of the negotiating team is relatively clear. What positive contribution can other parliamentarians make over the process of COP30 in representing the thoughts and scrutiny of this Parliament on the international stage?

Nigel Topping: I would urge you to consider two. One comes from a spirit of generosity, and one from a spirit of self-interest—perhaps both have an element of self-interest. The generosity part is, share the experience here. This is a complicated thing that we are doing. It is a complete rewiring of the global economy. It has never been done deliberately before. It represents huge challenges and huge opportunities. We are well into this transition. We are more than halfway through the mitigation journey. We have really significant adaptation challenges still and a lot more to do on mitigation. We should share our experience. We have done more than almost any other country to put in place the processes, the plans and the policies. We are a good model to learn from. We have not always done things right, but there is a lot of stuff to learn from. Sharing that experience, as parliamentarians who were right in the thick of it, can be incredibly valuable for spreading a sense that this is possible. We are brilliant when we put our minds to these complex challenges.

The other thing is to sell the UK and say how this consistent policy environment has attracted investment and will continue to attract investment. One other hat I wear is as a non-executive on the National Wealth Fund. That body was set up by statute and is now investing—not granting—billions of dollars of public money. It has already created 68,000 jobs and is investing in the leading edge of technology, in long-



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duration storage, in bigger interconnectors to stop us curtailing power. Every one of those investments is creating jobs in someone's constituency and is creating economic growth. Tell that story, that the UK is a great place to invest in if you have technology and capital you want to put to work to drive the energy transition, which the whole world is committed to doing.

Chair: Wonderful. Thank you very much indeed. It was nice to meet you and great to hear from you. We will bring this panel to a close.