

Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee

Oral evidence: Net zero and UN climate summits, HC 107

Wednesday 23 June 2021

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Members present: Darren Jones (Chair); Alan Brown; Charlotte Nichols; Alexander Stafford.

Scottish Affairs Committee member also present: Sally-Ann Hart.

Environmental Audit Committee member also present: Barry Gardiner.

Treasury Committee member also present: Felicity Buchan.

Foreign Affairs Committee member also present: Tom Tugendhat.

International Development Committee member also present: Chris Law.

Questions 1 - 54

Witnesses

I: Nigel Topping, High-Level Champion for Climate Action, COP 26; Andrew Griffith MP, UK Net Zero Business Champion, COP 26; Matt Toombs; Director of Partnerships and Engagement, COP 26 Unit, Cabinet Office.



Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Nigel Topping, Andrew Griffith MP and Matt Toombs.

Q1 **Chair:** Welcome to this morning's session of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Select Committee, picking up from our friends next door in the Scottish Affairs Committee for this special hearing on COP 26. I am delighted to welcome Nigel Topping, the COP 26 high-level climate action champion, physically in the room today. It is nice to see you. Welcome to Andrew Griffith, who is an MP and the UK net zero business champion; again, he is in the room. On the screen today is Matt Toombs, the director for partnerships and engagement in the COP 26 Unit in the Cabinet Office. Good morning to you all.

The first question is just to set the scene. Could you explain to the Committee what your separate roles are, how they interact with each other and what your particular mandates are?

Nigel Topping: Good morning, everyone. It does bear some explanation because the role of high-level climate action champion is not immediately obvious from the title. The role was created in Paris in 2015, at COP 21, as part of that multilateral agreement, in recognition of the observation that such a massive transition to a zero-carbon economy needs the whole of society, not just national Governments. The role of the high-level champion is to work with what the multilateral system calls non-party stakeholders or non-state actors, which means business, investors and sub-national governments—cities, states and regions—as well as broader civil society.

It is normally a two-year appointment. For me, it is three years, because COP 26 has been delayed. There are always two high-level champions. I work very closely with Gonzalo Muñoz, who is the Chilean high-level champion. It is important to be clear that, although I am appointed by the Prime Minister as part of the responsibilities of holding the presidency, my mandate comes from the UN. The stakeholders who I work with are everybody but national Governments.

Very briefly, what we do is work to mobilise more ambition and action in support of the three pillars of the Paris Agreement: mitigation, so the Race to Zero, which we can talk more about later; resilience, so the Race to Resilience; and private finance, working closely with Mark Carney's team on the Glasgow Finance Alliance for Net Zero. All of those work very closely with Andrew and the COP 26 Unit, but I will hand over to Andrew to explain his role now.

Chair: Thank you. Mark Carney is appearing before the Treasury Select Committee in a few weeks, so we will hear from him soon as well.

Andrew Griffith: It is a pleasure to be in front of this Committee this morning on the important topic of action on climate. I was appointed in November 2020 as the Prime Minister's UK net zero business champion, so that is my domain. I work about two and a half to three days a week



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on this role. It is voluntary; I am not a Minister and I do not have any responsibility for the delivery of policy.

What I really see my role as doing is helping to mobilise the UK business community, from the very largest to the very smallest, to get them to put in place science-based targets that are credible, and the action plans behind those. That is primarily the Race to Zero. That is the franchise that the UN, the UK and COP are all behind.

I do that through a series of business engagement, working with businesses directly. I have engaged with the vast majority of the FTSE 100 through business representative groups and bodies like the CBI and the Institute of Directors, but also things like the Council for Sustainable Business and the Build Back Better Business Council. There are then a series of bilateral meetings, initiatives and articles. It is, essentially, a business engagement role. My role is driving that, adding a little bit of bandwidth to Government efforts, with the successful objective of showing that the UK business community as a whole is behind the Government and behind the important action that we need on climate at COP 26.

I can elaborate more, but that, in a précis, is the role that I am doing today, supported out of BEIS. I get a small office out of BEIS, but I do work across Government and very closely with the business relations team in Number 10.

Chair: Thank you for that, and we will come back to all of those issues in more detail today. I should have said that, because this is one of our special COP sessions, we have lots of guests on our Committee today. First up, no less, is a friend from the Environmental Audit Committee, Barry Gardiner.

Q2 **Barry Gardiner:** Mr Toombs, the COP president-designate, Alok Sharma, has said that he wants this to be “the most inclusive COP ever”. I believe that your august title is director of partnerships and engagement, so I guess this question falls to you. If it is going to be the most inclusive COP ever, are the UK Government going to take a leaf out of the books of other Governments and allow ordinary Members of Parliament to be part of the delegation to the COP?

Matt Toombs: I will pick this up directly. You are right that the COP president-designate has committed to this being the most inclusive COP ever. That is something that we are championing as a presidency and working with a wide range of organisations and groups on to embed across the approach to COP.

Q3 **Barry Gardiner:** My question was really specific. It was about allowing Members of Parliament who are not Ministers to be part of the delegation to the COP, as many other countries across the world do, so that they can be there, in the Blue Zone, assisting the negotiations through the links that they have as parliamentarians with other Parliaments.



Matt Toombs: The UK Government are looking into this and looking into what is possible, and will provide further details in due course on this. The UK Government are very aware of the desire of parliamentarians to be part of this. I am afraid that I cannot give you a direct answer now, but I know that we will come to provide it.

Q4 **Barry Gardiner:** It is not a matter of looking into; it is a matter of deciding who is going to be in your delegation, but I take your answer. Let me move to the issue of others that are partners at the COP and, in particular, the Civil Society and Youth Advisory Council. The president-designate said that he did not want this just to be a talking shop. He wanted to ensure that their voice would have influence over the COP 26 negotiations. It was very welcome to set that group up. How are they going to have influence over the COP 26 negotiations?

Matt Toombs: As you say, the COP president has set up the Civil Society and Youth Advisory Council, which has met quite a number of times already. It has met on issues of detail and substance around the negotiations. It has done that in a timely way ahead of particular events.

To take an example earlier this year, the UK hosted a climate and development ministerial looking at some of the core questions that climate-vulnerable countries are looking to address through the negotiated process, such as loss and damage and adaptation finance—important questions that they are looking to the presidency to address.

The Civil Society and Youth Advisory Council met in advance of this climate and development ministerial to discuss the issues that were being raised and that would be discussed at the ministerial. That is one example where we are building the timetable of the issues that they discuss, so that it is relevant to the discussion that Ministers or negotiators are involved in.

Q5 **Barry Gardiner:** That is excellent. What are we doing to ensure that financing and technical support through the Santiago Network for Loss and Damage is secured at COP 26?

Matt Toombs: You are absolutely right that we are very much committed to operationalising the Santiago Network. The UK negotiators have been involved in a series of workshops over recent weeks in terms of how the Santiago Network gets operationalised. As the presidency, we are very much committed to addressing the issues of loss and damage and giving them the importance that they deserve in the run-through to COP 26.

Q6 **Barry Gardiner:** We have a champion on adaptation and resilience but we do not yet have a champion on loss and damage in the negotiating team. Would it not be a good idea to appoint one?

Matt Toombs: You are absolutely right. Anne-Marie Trevelyan is the Minister responsible for adaptation. Within that role, she is engaging with a wide range of climate-vulnerable countries and talking to them about



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climate impacts and the impacts of loss and damage that they are experiencing. These issues are very much directly connected, and so are ones that she is addressing and picking up through her role.

Q7 Chair: Just very briefly, Nigel Topping, for non-state actors who are worried about not being able to physically come to COP in Glasgow, when will they know about online engagement?

Nigel Topping: There are two parts to that answer. One is about when they will know about physical engagement as a precursor to online engagement. I may hand back to Matt to say something specific, but there were recent announcements about the commitment to ensuring that all official delegations, including national Governments but also official non-state-actor delegations from civil society and the business community, will be supported with vaccines.

Q8 Chair: So there will be vaccines for non-delegation parties.

Nigel Topping: Matt may want to confirm that, but that is my understanding.

Q9 Chair: Matt, do you want to come in on that quickly? There will be vaccines for people who want to come to COP.

Matt Toombs: The Government have announced that we will work to provide vaccines to accredited delegations who would be unable to get them otherwise. Nigel is right that that includes accredited national delegations as well as accredited observers and accredited media delegations. It is beyond the national delegations, but it is those who are accredited to access the UNFCCC site at Glasgow.

Nigel Topping: That is incredibly important in terms of inclusivity. For those who have not been to a COP, of course there are the formal negotiations between national Governments, but the context is very much influenced by the scrutiny, the energy and the other conversations that are happening amongst all those non-state actors. That is very much to be welcomed.

As those arrangements are clarified in terms of the physical extent of the COP in the coming weeks, we are all working, as a result of learning through Covid, on how much more access we can provide digitally. We will very much have a hybrid COP, where we have a very strong physical presence, which is crucial, and will be able to bring in and beam out to millions more people as a result of getting more proficient with the technology that we are using today for the Committee.

Chair: So an extended digital fringe, but the vaccine information there is welcome, so thank you. We will come next to the Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Tom Tugendhat.

Q10 Tom Tugendhat: Thanks very much for letting me join you this morning. I am very interested in the role that non-state actors play in the lead-up to the COP 26 events. How do you see them contributing to the



presidency's overall strategy—not just in the room, as it were, but in the shaping of the events that lead up to the meeting later this year?

Nigel Topping: Perhaps I might start and maybe ask Andrew to say a bit about the UK. Matt might talk about the specific presidency campaigns.

We talk a lot about an idea that we call the ambition loop. As non-state actors step up and commit to net zero in a robust way in the short term, it sends a very helpful signal to policymakers in thinking about how far they might be able to go. This is policymakers at every level of government, in city, state and national Governments. A lot of what we are doing now is around the Race to Zero, which is about sending a very strong signal that the whole of the real economy is on the move. Over 4,500 businesses, investors and cities are now committed very strongly in the UK, which I will ask Andrew to comment on.

We are then also working at a sectoral level, within every sector of the economy. This is working with a very big network that we call the Marrakech Partnership, which is a group of non-state-actor organisations. You will be very familiar with many of them. Some of the strongest ones are UK-based, like the Climate Group, C40 Cities and the Carbon Disclosure Project. That community has worked on what we call climate action pathways. For every one of the 29 sectors that we now cover, there is a published pathway of what all the main actors need to do. This is a non-state-actor perspective.

In January, the president-designate launched what we call the Race to Zero breakthroughs, which are very specific objectives for each sector that we are aiming to get to, both in terms of a tipping point of ambition—trying to get a critical mass of the main actors in each sector—but also very specific outcomes that we are aiming for in the short term.

I will give you an example to illustrate this. We have been working very closely with the whole shipping ecosystem to agree on what the shape of the transformation needs to be. All international shipping at the moment burns hydrocarbons, so there is a very steep learning curve needed to get to the point where we have international shipping being powered by zero-carbon fuels—probably hydrogen-based, and probably green ammonia. We have worked to get everyone to agree that we need to have 5% of international shipping being zero-carbon by 2030, so that we are then on the steep bit of the S-curve. That is on the private sector side.

It has been very encouraging recently to see Mission Innovation, which is an initiative to drive innovation from 23 Governments, with a very strong role from the UK, focusing on the same objectives. We have both sides of the ambition loop driving towards the same objective.

Q11 **Tom Tugendhat:** Can I perhaps force you into a technical answer? Although the president-designate is able to fly around the world and see people, various others are not. Are you using as hubs various of our high



commissions and embassies around the world to try to bring these business groups and local governments together now, or are you doing it from the centre and communicating out? What are you using other Governments to do? Are they part of the conversation, or is this led from London?

Nigel Topping: The Foreign and Commonwealth network has been hugely helpful. We have run a lot of webinars in different countries, recently in the Philippines and the Czech Republic. That is one area where there is very intelligent collaboration. I have a non-state-actor global mandate, but the UK has this global network, so we are collaborating to try to operationalise the Race to Zero campaign in those countries through posts.

Q12 **Tom Tugendhat:** Andrew Griffith, perhaps the most important non-state-actor partner is business. If we do not include business, this will simply become a talking shop for politicians and NGOs. How are you engaging them? How are you making sure that this is not just about one or two large businesses greenwashing, but about small businesses embedding these values within the core of the process?

Andrew Griffith: You are absolutely right, Mr Tugendhat, in terms of the importance of business. Business has a real role to play as a non-state actor. That is not a term that comes from my world, but the role of business is to make sure that Governments go into the room at the climate summit, feeling the press on their back, not being dragged back or impeded.

I have to say that the Race to Zero, which is a global franchise, has been well operationalised in the UK. As of today, we have 45 of the 100 largest companies in the UK signed up to Race to Zero. That is more than any other market. That is the FTSE 100 index. As an index, that is the furthest down the road. The level of take-up in the UK is somewhat lapping some other countries. That is important anyway, because our businesses have some of the most globally diverse supply chains. If a large UK business with global supply chains signs up to Race to Zero, it starts to put in place those credible science-based targets. That cascades down its supply chain and, in so doing, provides the innovation, the technology solutions and the new, improved processes that will teach the world how to decarbonise. It is an incredibly important matter.

You talked about small businesses, and a lot of the Government endeavour and resource, albeit impeded by the pandemic that we are in, is now on small businesses, of which there are 6 million in the UK. They make up 99% of all businesses by volume and a majority of carbon emissions. The UK Government, I and broader colleagues are reaching out to small businesses. I will conclude by saying that there is a role for every parliamentarian and every representative to use their voice in their local communities to reach out to those small businesses.

Q13 **Tom Tugendhat:** To follow up on that, there are various examples of



international, or indeed national, organisations championing this effectively. Certainly, German small businesses, often through chambers of commerce, have a much stronger network than some other countries in terms of coalescing views and making sure that best practice is followed. Are you engaging with these less traditional non-governmental business bodies here, such as the Federation of Small Businesses, or local chambers of commerce in Germany? Around the world, there are very different examples of them. Are you engaging with them to make sure that we come to the conference in Glasgow in the best possible shape?

Andrew Griffith: Yes, absolutely. The engagement plan includes a small-business climate action taskforce that I have convened and lead on. The Federation of Small Businesses, Business in the Community and Small Business Britain are just some of the groups, as is the Institute of Directors, which currently has a zero-carbon bus trundling around the country and running small roadshows and events.

We are trying to reach out to and work with every part of the small-business community to raise the profile and to raise awareness, which is going well. The UK Government have a Business Climate Hub, which you can go to right now on businessclimatehub.org. That itself is part of an initiative that has been led by the International Chamber of Commerce. The SME Climate Hub is part of the Race to Zero, so it is very important that every business feels that it can be involved.

You are absolutely right that this is not just about big business but about every business. In fact, small businesses, with their deep roots in place and their deep connections with their customers, are really powerful advocates for change and we would love to see more of them sign up. I hope that this Committee would endorse that initiative. With just over 19 weeks to go until COP 26, there has never been a better time to start to take action to make the pledge.

Q14 **Charlotte Nichols:** I wanted to come to international legacy aims. If I could start with Andrew, in terms of international engagement with non-state actors, what legacy is the presidency aiming to achieve from COP 26? What are your goals for a COP legacy post November?

Andrew Griffith: I will take that very briefly and then ask my colleagues to take that forward, because my domain is relatively narrow. Within the business community, the legacy that we would like to leave is thousands of UK businesses having signed up and made a commitment. That builds a crescendo of momentum, giving everybody in the room at COP 26 the imperative to make the ambitious targets that we need and, thereafter, to put those actionable plans in place. That is in the business domain, and it is, of course, business and what I call the ferocious problem-solving power of business that will take this as a tractable problem and solve the crisis in the longer term.

Nigel Topping: I will answer that question in two ways: first, about the momentum in the real economy, and then the institutional legacy.



Building on what Andrew said, we are aiming for this to really be the first COP that is very much about action. Paris was about negotiating one agreement. This is really about action in the real economy, hence the crucial role of business. The legacy that we are working towards through the high-level champions team and the Marrakech Partnership is to have reached that breakthrough momentum in at least 10 sectors, so that, leaving the COP, it is all about implementation. I sometimes say, slightly tongue in cheek, that this needs to be the FOMO COP for business; in other words, if you are not committed to transition by the COP, you are realising that you need to wake up and get on the train very quickly

In terms of institutionally, at COP 25 in Madrid, one of the formal decisions was to ask the high-level champions to seek feedback and improve the arrangements for working with non-state actors. A required legacy is that Gonzalo and I put forward those plans. We have sought that feedback and had very strong feedback that says, "Do more of what you are doing. Leave a permanent infrastructure to drive it. Keep being ambitious. Keep innovating. Pay more attention to the global south". My role will continue until COP 27, which will be in an African country, which will help with that.

There are two bits of legacy: first, momentum in the real economy; and, secondly, solidifying the infrastructure around keeping this non-state-actor momentum going for future COPs.

Matt, you might want to say something about the presidency legacy in terms of the campaigns.

Matt Toombs: Just to add briefly on this, very much supporting the legacy plans that Nigel has described in terms of the non-state community, the presidency will also be very much focused on the structures needed to support the transitions that we are looking at over the next decade in terms of energy, zero-emission vehicles, nature and deforestation, finance, adaptation and resilience.

As the presidency, we have developed the Energy Transition Council, bringing together countries and international partners to look at the just transitions needed, particularly to phase out from coal. We have established dialogues with producer and consumer countries of agricultural trade products that contribute to deforestation. There is a range of different approaches that we have begun and will want, as presidency, to see developed over the coming years.

Q15 **Charlotte Nichols:** I know that this was alluded to earlier in an answer to Barry Gardiner, but I just want to dig down into the issue around access to vaccines. The Government's decision to provide Covid vaccines to those accredited delegations who would be unable to get them otherwise is welcome, but I am interested to know whether this will include observers and journalists from developing countries who would usually attend in the same numbers as usual.



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How will the presidency ensure that access to the conference will not be biased towards the global north, and that countries without strong access to Covid vaccines are fairly represented among observers and the media?

Matt Toombs: That is really important and that is why the focus of our announcement was on those UN-accredited observers and media delegates. This is not with a presumption in favour of the global north. This needs to be equal across all parts of the world. That is why the UN oversees the process of accreditation—to ensure that that is fair—and why the UK's commitment is then to provide vaccines to those accredited parties who would not be able to access them otherwise. We would expect that to apply to those accredited observers or media organisations from parts of the world with lower access to vaccines. The purpose of it is absolutely to meet the challenge that you have raised.

Chair: Very good. We go next to our guest from the International Development Committee, Chris Law.

Q16 **Chris Law:** Civil society organisations have had a significant influence on previous COPs, putting pressure on parties to increase ambition through informal discussions outside the negotiating rooms, but often within the conference venue. What can be done to maximise the prominence of civil society voices at COP 26? Should their physical presence at the conference be reduced or moved online?

Andrew Griffith: I would direct that to Matt. One of the points that I always make to businesses that are looking to get involved is that we do not have to define COP as just the moment and just the room. There are a variety of events, starting now, in all parts of the United Kingdom, including in Glasgow, at the same time as COP, where businesses and other civil society groups can have a voice. We should be wary about defining it as a single point, but perhaps Matt could elaborate.

Matt Toombs: Mr Law, I very much agree on the importance of civil society and non-state parties in successful COP outcomes and in raising ambition within the COP, which is why we are absolutely committed to working closely with civil society organisations and giving them the prominence and the platform to be able to support and achieve that. As Andrew says, this is in the run-up to COP as much as COP itself, and the different forms that we have for engagement with civil society reflect that through the UNFCCC observer groups, the Civil Society and Youth Council that has been established, Friends of COP and other routes.

We are very much looking at working with civil society partners on how we can do this as effectively as possible. We are also working with Chile, chairs of the subsidiary bodies and the UNFCCC secretariat to work on how we can bring the voices of young people, women, indigenous peoples and others to the COP to support the climate action that is needed.

Q17 **Chris Law:** As a follow-up to that, an online summit may create additional obstacles for some groups—for example, those with weaker



internet connections or lower computer literacy, or in distant time zones. How will we ensure that these groups are still able to engage meaningfully with the summit?

Matt Toombs: As we said at the beginning, we are planning towards an in-person summit. We are planning to host the in-person summit in November. We are working with the various public health authorities to put in place all of the safety precautions and responses that are needed. The first response would be that that is what we are working towards.

We did run the intersessionals this June with the subsidiary bodies to work through the various negotiated mandate issues. That was run on a virtual basis. I absolutely recognise the concerns that you mention in terms of time zones, connectivity and spaces for different groups of negotiators to come together before the main sessions. We made every effort possible to address those and did manage to hold positive, substantive discussions as part of the intersessionals and have learned from that.

The aim is to hold an in-person COP in Glasgow, and so there will be opportunities for civil society organisations to be there in person.

Q18 **Chris Law:** I am aware of the priority to make it in-person. What I really want to know, though, is that, given the fact that we are now on a new variant—even in the UK, we are having some issues just now about where can open up at different times—is it reasonable to expect a hybrid environment at COP 26 this year? If not, are you at least preparing contingencies for that?

Matt Toombs: As we said, we are learning from the virtual experiences that we have had. The intersessionals that we had earlier this month are one process of learning and engagement on a virtual basis. We are working with Chile, the UNFCCC secretariat and the subsidiary bodies on how we can use technology to support what is planned to be an in-person event. We are working with those organisations to look at how technology can support it.

Q19 **Alan Brown:** I am going to return to the Race to Zero, which was touched on earlier, when Andrew gave figures on how many of the largest companies in the UK have signed up. I just wanted to ask how many businesses have signed up overall to the Race to Zero. What proportion of businesses does this represent, first in the UK, and secondly internationally?

Nigel Topping: Maybe I will start internationally and then ask Andrew to deal with the UK. This is changing very quickly, because it is a successful campaign and people are signing on. From the latest figures, we have just 4,500 entities overall. Just over 3,000 are businesses; the rest are cities, investors, et cetera. That is about 15% of the global economy covered. Andrew has a better overview of the UK.



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Andrew Griffith: The UK, as I say, is leading. We should be proud of UK businesses. There is more to, but so many of them are stepping up and taking a lead, which is appropriate, as we host the climate summit. Over 1,200 UK businesses are signed up to Race to Zero, with the same caveat that Nigel talked about.

The way you do that is through an accessor body, and so there is always a little time lag in that. That represents 45 of the largest 100 companies and almost £1 trillion of combined market capitalisation. The rate of sign-up in the last few weeks, as we start to quicken the pace, has increased by about 30%. Globally, about 35% of the entire global race consists of UK companies. That reflects the fact that companies in the UK are engaged, the effort that the UK Government have put in to signing businesses up to the Race to Zero, and the profile of COP 26 at the moment.

I pay credit to all of the different organisations that are working in this space. It is a real pyramid and there are lots of bodies out there, raising the profile of the race and doing the job of helping to communicate that.

Q20 **Alan Brown:** Pledges are an important first step, but, as we all know, actions speak louder than words. What proportion of these pledges translate into near-term action on climate change? What are the UK Government doing to monitor outcomes in the near-to-medium term from companies that sign up? On this Committee, we have heard evidence from third-sector organisations concerned about greenwashing, where companies make the pledge but do not have plans in place to get to net zero. What level of pledges and action is needed to help the UK meet its target to reduce emissions by 68% by 2030?

Nigel Topping: Maybe I can take the general point about credibility of commitments under Race to Zero and then hand back to Andrew for the UK.

It is a really important point. We are just starting a consultation on how to really make sure we address those issues of credibility. Race to Zero is only a year old, but it requires organisations to not just make a long-term pledge. Very few CEOs in position today will be around in 2050, so it would be not so meaningful just to say that net zero 2050 is the goal and then to leave it at that. We also require that every company, investor and city has a short-term goal to 2025 or 2030, which is consistent with the overall scientific need to halve emissions by 2030, and then that they get on with implementing that plan and publish progress every year.

We already have, in the UK-based Carbon Disclosure Project, the best database of over 10,000 companies and hundreds of cities, states and regions that, every year, publish their emissions and plans. With the implementation of TCFD recommendations in the UK and other jurisdictions, that is going to become a formal requirement.



There is often a lag between the initial commitment and the plans. It is the same at the policy level as it is at the strategy level for a company, but there is a requirement within the Race to Zero that the pledge is followed with a published plan and then published progress on an annual basis. That means that Gonzalo and I, with the Race to Zero team, are right now looking at what the arrangements will be in the future for tracking progress, holding people to account and, if necessary, removing from the race people who have made the promise but not made enough progress.

Andrew Griffith: And all of that on steroids for the UK. We have the most transparent financial disclosures; they are going to be mandatory; they are rigorous. UK businesses should hear that Race to Zero is the kitemark. There are a lot of different initiatives in this space and a lot of different standards. It is really important that business look at this. They know that it is not about greenwashing; it is about science-based, 1.5-degree-compatible targets.

The answer to your question is that we want every business to be engaged. To give you some sense of the pace, as recently as November 2020, only 14 FTSE 100 companies were engaged in the race. As of today, that is 45. I only give the FTSE companies because they are the easiest for you to track and understand. We are seeing the same level of ambition and momentum further down the list as well.

Q21 **Alan Brown:** You are saying that, in terms of the FTSE 100, it has increased from 14 to 45. That is good, but what does that mean in terms of actions that you have seen with regard to commitments to emissions being reduced in the short term? Are you seeing that? As Nigel just explained, there is a lag between pledge and plans following. Are you seeing now that the plans are following and being put in place?

Andrew Griffith: I am seeing plans being put forward and put in place. As part of the sign-up process, those plans have to be put in place rapidly. To be clear, many of these companies have already been doing this. As Nigel talked about, they have already had disclosures under the Carbon Disclosure Project. A lot of them are working on cross-industry initiatives; there is a real role to play here that we may want to touch on in future Committee sessions.

Last week, we launched Tech Zero with all of the largest technology companies in the UK. You will be familiar with the work of Jet Zero in aviation, which has gone from almost nowhere to starting to put concrete plans in place around areas like sustainable aviation and the next generation of aviation platforms. I lend some of my time to an initiative called Construct Zero, which, again in the UK, is trying to decarbonise the built environment. Of course, there is a huge amount of work to do, but right now, as we sit here, there are business executives putting detailed plans in place.



Nigel Topping: It might be helpful to share a link afterwards to a recent report by the Science Based Targets initiative, which has asked that very question. What happened, in terms of emissions, to the companies that committed two or three years ago? The evidence is very strong that those companies are reducing quickly in real terms. I am happy to provide a link later, if that is of interest to the Committee.

Q22 **Alan Brown:** That would be great. What level of business commitment is required to help the UK meet its 68% emission reduction by 2030? Has that been evaluated?

Andrew Griffith: If it has, I have not seen that piece of work. My answer would be that every business has to engage. This is such a profound reinvention of our economy to decarbonise an economy that has been based on one particular energy source for so many years. I would be surprised if we could do this without all voices and all parts of society being engaged in that endeavour, but I can report that the evidence that I see from the engagement is that everybody is doing so and that there is a real willingness to act on this agenda.

Q23 **Alan Brown:** I will move on to the involvement of SMEs, supply chains and trade bodies with regard to this. The British Chambers of Commerce has said that the majority of SMEs do not understand the relevance of climate change and COP 26 to their business, and that the COP 26 campaigns do not provide enough proactive support to help them take action. Do you agree with that? Can you explain what you are doing to improve SME awareness and encourage them to take action on climate change?

Andrew Griffith: That is not what I see. I see a good level of awareness and an increasing appetite for action, but some barriers in terms of education and knowledge of what steps make sense to do so. That is the research that we see from bodies like the chambers of commerce up and down the country.

In terms of what steps we are taking, the Prime Minister launched, just at the end of last month, the business climate action campaign. Every business in the UK, working with partners such as NatWest, which is a key sponsor of COP 26, is able to promote the Business Climate Hub. It has some simple messages, and it is important to keep them simple, so that they are accessible to every business.

By definition, that sometimes means that they are broad, but they are simple things that every business in the country can do to take the first step on the journey. That is live right now and we are seeing a good level of sign-up. In the short period since it has been launched, it now already has more than 1,000 small businesses signed up and we are seeing a good rate of increase every day.

Q24 **Alan Brown:** In terms of following up with action rather than just pledges, the Committee heard from Miranda Barker, chair of the British



Chambers of Commerce's Climate Challenge Group. Her impression was that it is almost like, "Click here to pledge", but SMEs do not really know what to do after that. What are you doing to make sure that the pledges follow through to workable plans and actions?

Andrew Griffith: If you go to the Business Climate Hub, you will see some of the simple steps. That has been produced with small businesses, including with representatives of the chambers of commerce. It has been tested. The messaging is clear. I would challenge any business to go there, look at it, spend some time and then say that they are not clear about the things that they can do. Of course, it will continue to evolve, and so, as we are able to add more resources, create more links and work with more different parties, we can continue to grow that site.

- Q25 **Alan Brown:** On the decarbonisation agenda, one thing that the UK Government control is procurement in terms of the CfD process for renewable energy. One of the complaints often is that there is not enough UK local content coming through in the contracts, because lowest price takes all. What are the Government doing to change that procurement process to get higher levels of UK local content and use that as a way to also help SMEs get involved in decarbonisation, make pledges and, hopefully, decarbonise their manufacturing processes?

Andrew Griffith: That is an excellent point. I do not have a formal policy role but I am familiar, as the Member probably is, with the consultation on the new national public procurement policy framework. Although it does not move straight to a mandate on net zero, it explicitly mentions putting in place the architecture to use Government procurement—of course, local government procures a great deal of services as well and is free to do so—as a potential mobilising force for action on net zero. That framework is there and is available on the Government website. The consultation may have closed, but the framework is there.

- Q26 **Alan Brown:** Moving on to the topic of Race to Resilience, Nigel, what are your goals for it to achieve by COP 26 and in the longer term?

Nigel Topping: Thanks for the opportunity to explain the Race to Resilience. We have really good momentum on mitigation and on the Race to Zero. Generally speaking, there has been less work done with the business community on resilience. We launched the Race to Resilience formally in January at the Climate Adaptation Summit. If you think of the Race to Zero as being about we drive zero-carbon technologies through every sector, the Race to Resilience is much more about lives and livelihoods around the world.

We use a different lens, particularly focusing on the three communities that are most exposed to climate risk. Coastal and river communities are exposed to coastal surges and flooding. 2 billion people around the world rely on smallholder-farmer incomes and are very exposed to both drought and flooding in terms of agricultural productivity. 1.6 billion people are urban poor, often in very fragile dwellings that do not have



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access to services and are often built on flood plains, so are particularly exposed to floods and heat stress.

The Race to Resilience is less mature than the Race to Zero. The overall objective over the next 10 years, by 2030, is to reduce the vulnerability of 4 billion lives and livelihoods. The objective by COP is to have initiatives and partners on board that are reaching 1 billion of those lives and livelihoods. We have 21 initiatives across the spectrum, from insurance to mangrove restoration to the supply of digital services to smallholder farmers, already in the Race to Resilience, and we are looking to scale those up and add another 10 to 20 before we get to COP, to very much to lay the foundations for a 10-year campaign on that crucial initiative, which is so important to communities all around the world.

We have resilience challenges in the UK, but the challenges are much greater in many of the countries that are parties to the COP, and it is one of the things that they are most looking for help on. We are trying to mobilise the non-state-actor community to build more momentum through the Race to Resilience.

Q27 Alan Brown: You have identified the issue and are taking action on it. At the UK level, on 16 June the Committee on Climate Change said that the Government's lack of planning for climate risks is "shocking" and that climate risks have been underfunded and ignored. You outlined a 10-year plan, but is the planning going to be matched with funding, or is there still a real risk this is not going to be addressed when it needs to be?

Matt Toombs: I am happy to pick that up. I am aware of this report. The COP Unit is responsible for domestic adaptation planning. I know that the Government have welcomed the report and are going to consider its recommendations. They already have plans in action, particularly to put nature at the heart of its adaptation and resilience work, and that is embedded across its peat action plan and trees action plan. They are embedding the science around adaptation and resilience into planning and decision-making around major infrastructure, and have put out a long-term flood policy statement, showing how they will build resilience to flooding and coastal change.

There is investment sitting behind those, as you asked, in terms of the UK's own adaptation. They have captured that in terms of an adaptation communication, which is the vehicle that we are asking all countries to produce in the run-up to COP as the clear statement of what that country is doing to address adaptation, and a vehicle for mobilising finance, both public and private, to come behind the actions set out in that plan.

Q28 Alan Brown: Completely separate to that, I have a final question. What role do the principal partners have in COP 26 other than providing funds to reduce the costs of the conference to the taxpayer? Is there a reason why the sponsorships details are not being released until after COP 26?



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Matt Toombs: The role of the principal partners is to support the UK presidency's preparations for the COP in terms of providing resources, but also to act as advocates for the Race to Zero. They are all members of the Race to Zero, as Nigel has explained, and they have been involved in a very active way in supporting the UK presidency's advocacy for this. Hitachi and NatWest are two examples of principal partners who were part of the Business 7 Climate Leaders Summit just before the G7, and they were using that position to encourage other businesses to sign up to the Race to Zero. It is a real advocacy role within the business community that we are working with the principal partners on.

Andrew Griffith: They are both providing me with very practical support. NatWest has communicated with 400,000 of its small business customers on behalf of the small-business campaign. Scottish Power is doing the same. We would endeavour to harness all of those really strong organisations to leverage what we are trying to do.

Q29 **Chair:** I have a couple of clarifications. Andrew, you said that, of the global number of businesses on the Race to Zero, 35% were UK businesses. That is great from a UK perspective, but does that mean that other countries are not pulling their weight?

Andrew Griffith: That is one for Nigel. I am proud of the UK but there is more that we can do here as well.

Q30 **Chair:** You get a good mark. Nigel, what about the rest of the world?

Nigel Topping: On the face of it, the simple answer would be yes, but I have to give real credit to the UK Government for appointing Andrew, and to Andrew for doing an amazing job; getting that FTSE 100 number from 14 to 45 in six months is pretty incredible. There are also a lot of SMEs; again, Andrew has been very active. The International Chambers of Commerce have 45 million SME members between them around the world. The UK is leading and we have really good take-up in some other major economies such as Japan and the USA. The USA is catching up quickly, with a very different Administration helping that now.

It is also a good example of what I call the ambition loop, in that, where you have very strong and clear long-term policy, businesses are more likely to be comfortable stepping up to very bold commitments themselves. We are also seeing evidence of that effect all around the world. For example, in China, Baowu Steel is a huge steel company. Once President Xi committed the Chinese economy to getting to net zero by 2060, it committed to net zero by 2050. There may be a bit of a lag with other countries, but we are seeing a pick-up everywhere. Particularly in terms of SMEs is where the UK is very strong.

Q31 **Chair:** You did not mention the EU. Is it driving the Race to Zero?

Nigel Topping: The EU is strong. It varies from country to country. One of the questions earlier referred to Germany. In Germany, there is an organisation called Stiftung 2 Grad—the Foundation 2°—which is CEO-



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driven, as well as the chambers of commerce. Generally speaking, the UK, the EU, North America and Japan are stronger, but we are now starting to see a pick-up in Latin America and south Asia.

Q32 **Chair:** Andrew, am I right that we do not have a target for the number of UK businesses that we want to sign up to the race before COP?

Andrew Griffith: We do not. We had an original target of a third of the UK; we have exceeded that target in fairly short order.

Q33 **Chair:** Is that a third of the number of entities?

Andrew Griffith: A third of the FTSE. The original target that we aimed for was one-third of the FTSE 100. We are clearly through that. We have seen greater adoption than we had originally planned.

Q34 **Chair:** On the question that Alan was asking, we had evidence from the British Chambers of Commerce that said that it was not really getting through to SMEs. I cannot remember the number of SMEs or small businesses that we have registered on Companies House, but there is a lot of them.

Andrew Griffith: There is a lot of them.

Q35 **Chair:** But we do not have a target for those entities.

Andrew Griffith: We do not. We have just started that campaign. The target is as many as possible. We have 1,000 today. The barriers for small businesses are different. The awareness is there and the appetite is growing. There is a big piece of work in education, and a lot of the initiatives that I am working on now with partners are to provide tailored education through industry trade bodies.

If you are a restaurant, you want to know what solutions are tailored to being a restaurant. We are working on that with UKHospitality and the Food and Drink Federation. We also have partners like Google and Amazon. Google is now running a digital garage programme to give SMEs a simple how-to guide, and a lot of this is simple how-to. I am meeting a company that is in the business of helping to generate apps that can calculate your carbon footprint, for example.

Q36 **Chair:** Trade bodies can sign up and then work on behalf of their members to get them signed up.

Andrew Griffith: Yes, absolutely, and promote. All UK bodies are now behind promoting this Government campaign. They previously had their own. Those run in parallel. There is real benefit, as we have seen from the global Race to Zero, in just having this simple kitemark and one simple step.

Q37 **Chair:** Is there a list that we can see? Is it published?

Andrew Griffith: Do you mean of the businesses that have signed up?



Chair: Businesses and trade bodies.

Andrew Griffith: If you go to the Business Climate Hub, it is on there, under the section on, "Where can I get additional help?"

Q38 **Chair:** Finally, just to make sure that I understand this, if I was running, for example, a nursery, a coffee shop or a furniture-making business and wanted to sign up, I need to do the science-based target but I do not really know what that means or how I do it. Does this Business Climate Hub tell me how to do that, and is that sufficient, or would I have to go somewhere else?

Andrew Griffith: They do not have to go somewhere else. It tells them the steps. What they are signing up to is the pledge to commit to take that journey. Every small business, not just because it is the law, will be able to go on that journey from 2050. We know from the innovation that is out there and from the experience of others that they can all make it. There are no impediments to completing that journey. What we try to do is to get them to take the first steps along the way, and they can do that on that Climate Hub.

Chair: I will come to Felicity Buchan now, from the Treasury Select Committee.

Q39 **Felicity Buchan:** Thank you for the invitation to join you here today, and thanks also to Nigel, Andrew and Matt for everything that they are doing in the run-up to COP 26. Matt has already alluded to the fact that it is going to be very important to mobilise finance to ensure that we can transition towards net zero. That is clearly going to have to be public and private finance. Nigel, in your conversations with the financial sector, how much appetite is there to finance the transition to net zero?

Nigel Topping: Thank you for that very important question. I would say that there is now a huge appetite. It is conditional, because private capital will flow where the conditions are right to get a return. Let me just share a sense of momentum. Within the Race to Zero, we have several sub-sectoral initiatives. The Net-Zero Asset Owner Alliance—mainly pension funds—was launched in September 2019, the Net Zero Asset Managers initiative in December 2020, and the Net-Zero Banking Alliance in March this year.

Between them, we now have 160 finance players with over \$70 trillion of assets under management. That is a lot. When we launched the banking initiative, there were 43 global banks with \$28 trillion of balance sheets. All of those entities are committed to getting to net zero by 2050 and having robust plans in place, like everyone else in the Race to Zero, for what they are going to do in the next 10 years. Some of them have already published those plans and some are working on them now.

We tend to think of that finance needing to flow in three areas where the dynamics are different. One is where the technology is already relatively or very mature: renewable energy or electric vehicles. It is a scaling



issue. In other sectors like green hydrogen, aviation or shipping, the technology is less mature. It is more of a public-private collaboration, which is why the example that I gave about Mission Innovation on shipping, as well as the private side, is so important.

We need to get down the cost curve in those. Perhaps most challenging and most important for the success of the COP is the flow of private finance to emerging markets. The World Bank estimates that we need \$4 trillion per year to invest in the infrastructure needed to take emissions down while growing economies and to put in place the resilience measures necessary.

Most of that is going to come from the private sector, which is why, working very closely with Mark Carney, we not only launched the club of the Glasgow Finance Alliance for Net Zero, which pulls together all those finance sectoral initiatives within the Race to Zero, but we are also now launching some more detailed workstreams, including one on how we accelerate the financing of sectoral decarbonisation and another on how we accelerate the deployment of private finance in emerging markets.

There, as well as a role for the private sector itself, there is a key role for MDBs and DFIs in making sure that they are using their public capital to leverage private finance as much as possible. There is also a role for emerging-market policymakers to make sure that the enabling conditions are right. There is a lot of private finance ready to flow into those solutions when the conditions are right, and that is what we are aiming to do with GFANZ.

Q40 Felicity Buchan: Let me ask a follow-up question on emerging markets. In 2009, it was agreed that developed countries would mobilise \$100 billion a year of private and public financing for developing countries. The OECD estimates that we are at only \$80 billion at the moment. Can the \$100 billion target be achieved? If we are not achieving it, what are the implications?

Nigel Topping: I will give a perspective on that. The presidency is very focused on achieving the \$100 billion, and I may ask Matt to comment on that. From the private sector point of view, in terms of the reality in emerging markets, there are two challenges here. One is the delivery of a promise that was made, and the other is the deployment of capital to solve a development and climate problem. We need to make sure that we solve both of those, because there is a risk that we focus only on the \$100 billion and do not deal with the other systematic issues about bridging from \$100 billion to \$4 trillion a year. In my work with the private sector, we are trying to focus on the latter and making sure that we get more leverage.

I will give you a simple example. Just yesterday, some of you may have seen the IKEA Foundation, along with the Rockefeller Foundation, announce that they are putting \$1 billion of private philanthropic capital into an initiative around energy access. Hundreds of millions of people do



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not have any access to electricity of any sort at the moment, and 556 million of those are in sub-Saharan Africa.

Their aim is to leverage that \$1 billion to get \$10 billion of public finance from MDBs and DFIs. In turn, that has the potential to leverage upwards of \$100 billion of private finance. For me, it is important that we look at the whole chain of leverage, leverage and leverage, because it is the \$100 billion-plus that will need to be invested to change the energy infrastructure in sub-Saharan Africa.

I will hand to Matt for the specifics of the progress in measuring the \$100 billion.

Matt Toombs: As you said, Nigel, the \$100 billion is a critical issue. It is a core question of trust for developing countries to see that the pledges that were made in 2009 are followed through. It is one that, as presidency, we have been working very hard on, lobbying other countries and donors to come forward with their commitments. The UK has made its own commitment to double its climate finance. In the G7, we saw positive commitments from Canada and Germany, increasing their climate finance commitment to €6 billion a year, so we are seeing positive movement.

We are also working hard with the multilateral system. The World Bank produced its climate change action plan yesterday, which confirmed its commitment to 35% of its funding towards climate finance. We are very much working with each of these elements to follow through on the critical pledge that has been made.

There is also a really important set of questions around the quality of finance, which climate-vulnerable countries are particularly concerned about—the amount of public finance that goes towards adaptation, the amount of that that is grant-based, the predictability of that finance and the ability to access climate finance. All of these are issues that we, as presidency, are pulling together and working to make progress on and show how we can deliver against.

The \$100 billion really is a core question and, as presidency, we need to demonstrate how we are moving towards delivering it and showing that it can be achieved.

Q41 **Felicity Buchan:** Are you confident that we will be able to deliver \$100 billion?

Matt Toombs: The \$100 billion was a target set in 2009 for 2020. We cannot change money that is going to be spent in 2020. What we can do is change the commitments that are made for the years ahead, and particularly the years coming up to 2025. That is where we need to work with all of the donors and multilaterals and the mobilised private finance to show that it is achievable and will be delivered.

Q42 **Felicity Buchan:** Andrew, I will bring you in with a UK perspective. In



your conversations with the financial sector in the UK, what is the appetite to finance climate change activity?

Andrew Griffith: I am less close to the detail of the initiatives. I have been working with the businesses as their businesses—the main UK lending banks and pension funds, for example. I see a very significant appetite and it has changed materially, even over the last eight months, if I may say so. On the one hand, businesses have adjusted their risk models. They have fully embedded the risks of not taking action in those, and that is driving very different outcomes at investment committees. You will understand the decision-making process.

Secondly, the Prime Minister's 10-point plan for a green industrial revolution has really catalysed some of the upside opportunities from investing in these new low-carbon areas of the economy. Right now, we are often filling in some of the demand curves around those with things like the plan for growth and the Energy White Paper.

There is more to do on that, so not every one of those is an investible proposition today, but I do not think that we are going to see a dearth of capital. I would love to lay down the gauntlet to UK pension-fund money to potentially put more long-term capital at risk. I also know that there are people in Government working on initiatives in that space.

Q43 Felicity Buchan: Let me pick up on a comment that you made earlier about the fact that the UK is ahead of the game in terms of financial disclosures. Now that those are going to be mandatory, how are FTSE 100 companies reacting to mandatory financial disclosures?

Andrew Griffith: I should be careful not to stray too much into policy areas. Most of the biggest companies welcome disclosure. They see it as a useful tool for improving the dialogue with their investors. They are very aligned in terms of that conversation and, in many ways, welcome the chance to show what the actions that they are already taking are. We are very blessed by some really progressive, very successful large and small companies in the UK. The best companies have nothing to fear from mandatory disclosure. There is work to do anyway on fleshing out some of the details of a new green taxonomy that we are all going to need in the world we are going into.

Q44 Felicity Buchan: Let me bring in Nigel finally on that point. How receptive are other countries to mandatory disclosures? I am very conscious that we want a level playing field globally. Do you see uptake?

Nigel Topping: Yes. There is a very strong network of partnerships of progressive asset owners and managers in Europe, North America and Asia-Pacific who have been very influential in the shaping of the TCFD recommendations. A UK institution that I mentioned earlier, the Carbon Disclosure Project, is a voluntary disclosure platform but has hundreds of investors asking the companies that they own to disclose via that platform. That is entirely in line with the TCFD. The general sense globally is that people just want a level playing field and to get on with it.



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Also, leaders tend to think that mandatory disclosure will favour them, because they are ahead of the game and have nothing to hide. Laggards will be forced to think more about some of these issues, which may well price in some of their laggard risk.

Going back to your earlier comment about emerging markets, there is just one thing that I wanted to add. One of the things that we have not talked about is the very welcome mention in the G7 communique of a focus on what some call the green Marshall plan or the Build Back Better World. In the private sector, particularly when looking at this challenge of that \$4 trillion a year that I talked about in emerging markets, there is a strong sense that that is not an inappropriate analogy.

Given the size of the transition to the zero-carbon economy and the speed at which it is going to have to happen—we will have more science coming out in the summer that will scare a lot of people into realising that this really is existential and that we really must at least halve by 2030—and given the compounding fact of the challenges of responding to a Covid pandemic in emerging markets, there is a real sense that there is a global security and a global economic reason for some sort of green Marshall plan. What we are seeing from the private sector is real intrigue around that idea, and it is looking forward to hearing about the taskforce being formed and what it recommends and leads to in terms of practical actions.

Q45 Chair: Matt, this \$100 billion figure came up in the previous panel with the Minister. The \$100 billion of climate aid, as I understand it, was a target that was supposed to be delivered but has not. At COP 26, we are supposed to negotiate a new round of climate aid for the future. Given that we failed to meet our previous agreements from Paris, surely it is understandable that developing nations may think that wealthier nations are setting targets but not delivering. What is it that we are going to be able to do at COP 26 on this?

Matt Toombs: The mandate that COP 26 has is to initiate deliberations towards the post-2025 finance arrangement. That is just the formal bit of it, which is the mandate that we will have to start those discussions. What is critical, as you say, is what will be delivered between now and 2025. As presidency, that is absolutely our focus. As I said in the previous answer, we cannot affect what happened in 2020, but we can affect what happens between now and 2025. That is the focus that we have as presidency in working to mobilise as much finance as possible, so that we can show that we are delivering on the promise that was made for the years between now and 2025.

Chair: Thank you. I am sure we will come back to that point again in the future. We will go to the Scottish Affairs Committee now, with Sally-Ann Hart.

Q46 Sally-Ann Hart: I want to look at public engagement; my first question might be directed at Matt Toombs first. It is clear that public engagement



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is really important. Business engagement, as Andrew Griffith has highlighted, has been really successful, and business signup has been excellent. Maximum public engagement is key to the success of COP 26. Looking at the Scottish Government's consultation that was launched in December, have you had access to the results of that consultation? If so, how are you using the results to inform your plans for public and civil society engagement?

Matt Toombs: You are absolutely right that public and civil society engagement is critically important. We are using a range of different forums, such as engagement with citizens' assemblies and with the deliberative dialogues that BEIS has been running with members of the public. We have launched a campaign called Together for Our Planet, which is aimed at awareness, understanding and engagement with the UK public. We are looking to do that in a way that engages with all ages and all parts of society. We ran the Creative Earth art competition earlier this year. We have a competition arranged with "Blue Peter" aimed at young people in schools. There is a range of different factors that we are bringing there.

In terms of the Scottish Government consultation, I will have to follow up on that. That may be something that other parts of Government are aware of. As I said, this is something where we are working through a range of different routes. Together for Our Planet is the main banner organisation that we have, and we produce packs that have recently been sent to schools to explain how those in school can get involved, what COP 26 means and how they can be part of the work towards it. We are working with a range of different communities in a similar vein.

Q47 **Sally-Ann Hart:** Together for Our Planet, which is the UK Government's campaign, has a website that lists routes for people in the UK to engage with COP 26. It appears to be geared more towards businesses and children. I do not know if that is the case, but that is what it appears to be. What plans are there to engage with adults beyond businesses and with civil society?

Matt Toombs: You are right. There is really positive content on there for engaging with young people, schools and schoolchildren, and also for engaging with cultural groups and institutions, sports, and youth and community organisations. There is a range of areas of content on there. That campaign is then working with local authorities and community organisations across the UK to support them in putting on events. This will be very much driven by local places, not by UK Government, and will be providing toolkits and support, so that, where communities want to put on events connected to COP 26, they have the tools to support that.

Q48 **Sally-Ann Hart:** Looking at the toolkits, the website, et cetera, will those also encourage participation with more underrepresented and disengaged groups that you might want to engage with the whole event and the COP 26 agenda?



Nigel Topping: Let me speak from a global perspective in terms of a couple of campaigns that we are running with partners, which aim to reach those who might not normally be reached. One is very much focused on individual engagement and is called Count Us In. That is now a very big partnership, including lots of NGOs and businesses. It is both a front-facing campaign and a white-labelled campaign with a back-end where individual organisations can run their own branded campaign.

It is about motivating and mobilising individuals, so that they all add up to something. Right now, we have Sacha Dent paragliding around the UK in a big public mobilisation, trying to beat the Guinness World Record for the most people mobilised as part of one campaign. I would encourage everyone to look at that—she is amazing. The Count Us In campaign is particularly focused on trying to reach those who are not, if you like, the usual suspects or the people who are active environmentalists. It is particularly focused on the unreached middle ground, globally.

Another initiative that again seeks to bring in more diverse stakeholders and voices and to be more focused on place is the partnership that we have with TED, called Countdown. Some of you may have seen that the president-designate and I both participated in a small way last October in the launch of that. There will be another physical event in Edinburgh the month before the COP, as well as hundreds of events around the world, including around the UK, organised by TEDx, which seek to mobilise communities in place and bring in the diverse voices.

Those are just a couple of examples of global campaigns that are specifically designed to bring in those who might not normally be engaged.

Andrew Griffith: It is an incredibly important domain for all of us. COP has to be a participative exercise. People have used the analogy of the save the planet Olympics. It is important that we get the same sense that everybody feels, when world leaders gather in November, that they have a stake, because they absolutely do. There are a lot of initiatives. We will see more coming to fruition. Some of the ones that Nigel talked about are very well operationalised in the UK. We, as parliamentary representatives, have a role to play. We have all had “Dear Colleague” letters and it will be wonderful to see, over the coming months; now is exactly the right time to drive public engagement.

There is an easy takeaway for everyone today, which is the Plant For Our Planet campaign that was just launched. Plant a tree. Everybody can do that, in every part of society. That is another really good example of a campaign that the Government are bringing forward. Please spread the word, Sally-Ann.

Q49 **Sally-Ann Hart:** Thanks, Andrew. Looking at behaviour change, I know that BEIS took evidence from Michelle McGinty of Glasgow City Council. One of the top priorities that they have in Glasgow is “to use COP to accelerate our behaviour change conversations with our citizens”.



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Behaviour change is clearly something that we all need to think about. Every single one of us, looking forward, has some kind of behaviour change to make when it comes to climate change and our environment. Is this a priority for the presidency's activities with UK citizens too? Is it something for the whole of the UK to engage behaviour change? Is that an aim?

Matt Toombs: The approach around Together for Our Planet is very much aimed at raising awareness and understanding, and supporting the kind of behaviour changes that will be needed to underpin the journey towards net zero. As a presidency, our focus is on delivering the Paris goals and the transitions that are needed across the global economy to halve emissions over the next 10 years, and to see the changes in adaptation and finance that are needed. We have been working with countries, citizens and businesses to see those changes through, but this is very much underpinned, as you say, by the need for awareness, engagement and behavioural changes across society to support that. In the UK, BEIS has led work in terms of this, for example around the deliberative dialogues that I mentioned.

Q50 **Alexander Stafford:** My questions are about some of the public expectations for COP. Are they realistic? We often hear that the COP conference has only two weeks to save the planet or 10 days to this, or whatever. That undermines some of the public interest in it. What are the expectations of the public for this COP?

Nigel Topping: I can give a global perspective, but maybe Matt can start.

Matt Toombs: It is a really good question. As a presidency, we have tried to be as clear as possible on our approach and what we expect the outcomes to be. We have recently published a document, which we can share a link to, *COP 26 Explained*. It is intended to be a plain-English explanation of what the COP presidency is about and what we are aiming for.

It is worth saying that we are working absolutely flat out to make the summit safe and successful. We have seen progress. When we started as presidency, only a third of the world economy was covered by net-zero targets and we are now at 70%, with an increasing number of 2030 targets that are in line with the science. We are making progress, but we recognise that there is still a lot to do over the coming 18 weeks or so.

In terms of the expectations that I have through media, through documents like *COP 26 Explained* and through working and briefings with our stakeholders, we have been as clear as we possibly can be about what we are aiming for as presidency and what we see success as looking like.

Nigel Topping: It is often important to explain that the COP is not about a renegotiation of the global climate deal. What is being negotiated is



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quite tightly defined. It is really about finishing off the Paris rulebook, which is crucially important, because it is about faith in the multilateral system and finishing a job that was started five and a half years ago. It is important in terms of public expectations. Sometimes the media still get this wrong: it is not the case that world leaders are going to come together and renegotiate the whole deal.

It is quite important not to have that as an expectation, because you are guaranteed to be disappointed. It is the case that leaders will come together to finish off the negotiations and test whether the Paris Agreement is being adhered to. That is why the issues of the quality of the national plans—these NDCs that were required to be ratcheted—and of the \$100 billion that is required to be delivered are so important.

It is a test of progress and, ultimately, the public judgment will be whether enough progress has been made to honour the goals and the process of the Paris Agreement and to keep 1.5 degrees and a resilient zero-carbon future alive as a possible landing point. Again, that is why momentum in the real economy is so important. Ultimately, the change comes from the real economy. That is where the emissions are created and policies are implemented. I always tend to think of the negotiations, the national contributions and the real economy as being three domains of progress that the public will judge in Glasgow.

Q51 Alexander Stafford: You mentioned the potential disappointment and people thinking too much. What are you doing to mitigate that disappointment? At previous COPs, there has always been a bit of disagreement, with groups and Governments not having gone far enough. How are you getting across the message that we are not going to save the planet at this one COP and that it is just about how you measure it? What mitigation are you going to do to make sure that people are not disappointed?

Matt Toombs: The point that Nigel made is really important: that this is not just about negotiations and that we are not looking to renegotiate major treaties. This is about finalising the rulebook and we are looking to complete those negotiations in the run-up to Glasgow.

In terms of whether national plans will be ambitious enough to meet public expectations, the critical element is that this is part of a journey but also a crucial point to show whether there is still a realistic path to 1.5 degrees. We are asking countries that have not yet updated their 2030 plans to do so, so that they can show that we are still on a realistic path.

As Nigel said, we are very much focused on showing that there is sufficient action across those four particular goals, and on that being the judge of whether there has been success at COP on mitigation, adaptation, finance and collaboration, rather than the focus just being on what happens within the negotiating room.



Q52 Alexander Stafford: It is good that you are setting that expectation with me and the Committee. Hopefully, you will set that expectation with the public and the media. That is incredibly important as well. Nigel, how important is education and public engagement for delivering on the aims of the Paris Agreement?

Nigel Topping: You cannot underestimate the importance, because this is a whole-of-society transformation, which, by the way, is very attractive when you look at the landing zone of clean air, clean technology and more resilient communities. Change is always something that is tricky to navigate and there will always be those who worry about the process of change. It will be disruptive—we cannot deny that—but we know that, net, it will be a generator of better health, economic and job outcomes. The sooner we start engaging people in the science and practicalities of transition, the better.

I am really excited about two things. An initiative was launched by some UK NGOs, called Let's Go Zero, which is about helping schools get to net zero by 2030. What an amazing laboratory. That means that every child and parent involved in that school in the next 10 years is going to have a lived experience of this transformation, whether it is to do with power, transport or diet. Also, the universities are hugely engaged. We have over 700 universities now in the Race to Zero, and there is some nice competition. I noticed that Cambridge launched its net zero 2038 goal, and Oxford now have a net zero 2035 goal.

Young people are very engaged. I always use the example of the moon shot. In 1961, when Kennedy announced the intention to land on the moon within a decade, a lot of the people listening to that were teenagers. When the Eagle landed in 1969, two of the young engineers who had to make life-or-death decisions about whether or not to abort when the Eagle's computer failed 100ft above the moon's surface were young graduates who had been teenagers when the call to arms was issued.

Young people now are going to be in the workforce, in Government and in decision-making positions very quickly. They have already demonstrated that they are changing the politics with Fridays For Future, for example, but they are also going to be changing the economics in terms of their spending power and, perhaps more importantly, their employment power.

CEO after CEO tell me that they are being interviewed by young, talented engineers and other graduates as to the seriousness of their plans to tackle climate change and to put that at the heart of their business policy. Even if you are a CEO who does not believe in climate change, because you are somehow scientifically illiterate, you cannot deny the fact that young people do not want to work for you unless you have a really good plan. Young people's education is absolutely transformational.

Q53 Alexander Stafford: It is great that you are talking about young people



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and education, but so far no country has implemented the Paris Agreement commitments on public education and engagement. It has been suggested that this slow progress is due to a lack of monitoring, reporting and enforcement. What plans does the presidency have to address this at COP 26?

Matt Toombs: You are referring to Article 12 of the Paris Agreement, which is on action for climate empowerment. We absolutely see that as a cornerstone of meeting the goals of Paris. COP 26 will agree to renewed principles for how countries and stakeholders can empower each other, and we see a successful outcome of this as an important part of having an inclusive COP 26. There is a really important role for civil society and communities, as well as parties, to work together on what this outcome text should look like. As presidency, we are working with the subsidiary body chairs and the UNFCCC secretariat to make sure we have a successful outcome on this at Glasgow. At Glasgow, we will also be discussing the future work programme in this space and will want to set out an ambitious future set of actions for countries to take after Glasgow.

Q54 **Chair:** We have come to the end of the session. I think I could hear baby Stafford in the background, who will probably be around 30 by 2050, so maybe baby Stafford can come back and see how you guys have got on. Andrew, I looked at the Business Climate Hub but I could not see the list of companies and trade bodies that have signed up. Presumably you are happy just to send that to us.

Andrew Griffith: Sorry, we were talking at cross-purposes. I thought you were looking for the trade bodies that are partnering with us to provide further advice.

Chair: No, I was keen to see which companies and trade bodies have signed up in the UK to the Race to Zero.

Andrew Griffith: Let me give you a list of the taskforce members. There is a long list of the smaller companies and I need to check the permissions that have been obtained by the ICC and BEIS. We live in that data land. In terms of the big Race to Zero, those companies are on the Race to Zero website, so they are permissioned to be in the public domain.

Chair: We will talk via our officials to get that sorted. Thank you to Nigel Topping, Andrew Griffith and Matt Toombs for your time and contributions this morning.