



Foreign, Commonwealth
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Tom Tugendhat MP
Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee
House of Commons
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6 April 2021

Dear Tom,

Thank you for your letter of 23 March 2021. I warmly welcome the FAC's continued interest in the FCDO's important work to tackle climate change and help deliver a successful outcome at COP26 in Glasgow.

The Prime Minister, in his foreword to the recently published Integrated Review, wrote "in 2021 and beyond, Her Majesty's Government will make tackling climate change and biodiversity loss its number one international priority". COP26, which we will co-host with Italy in Glasgow in November, is a critical step – arguably the most important international gathering since Paris in 2015. It must set the world on a path to net zero by the middle of the century, giving the whole world confidence that sufficient near term steps are locked in: to dramatically speed up emissions reduction & clean up our economies; adapt and be more resilient; and support the most vulnerable. I am working with the COP President-Designate, who is responsible within the UK Government for delivering the COP26 summit, to help deliver an ambitious set of outcomes. This is a whole-of-government effort across many departments. Similarly, it is a whole-of-FCDO effort, across our Departments at the centre, and in every Post in the world. It is led by the COP26 Unit in Cabinet Office bringing together our domestic and international policy.

You have asked a number of questions in your letter, which I have answered in the attached annex. I am pleased to see the FAC and the recently formed Committee on COP26 taking a close look at the work of the Government in this critical year of climate action. The COP26 President-designate has recently outlined the engagement that we will undertake with Parliament in a Written Ministerial Statement. I look forward to further exchanges this year ahead of COP26.

THE RT HON DOMINIC RAAB MP

Annex

FAC's Inquiry into Environmental Diplomacy

- ***What is the minimum outcome that would need to be secured at COP26 for the FCDO to consider the conference a success? Will the Government be setting out more detailed objectives for the summit?***

The FCDO's objectives are shared across Government. At the Climate Ambition Summit on 12 December 2020, and in his Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament on 18 March, the COP President Designate Alok Sharma set out four clear objectives for the UK Presidency.

1. To ask countries to commit to net zero by mid-century, building on the 70% of world GDP covered by net zero targets today. To set the path to this, countries are being asked to come forward with ambitious 2030 emissions reductions targets (known as NDCs) which align with net zero goals. We will also be looking to accelerate the phase-out of coal, encourage investment in renewables, halt fossil fuel subsidies and pick up the pace on electric vehicle roll out. All of these areas are critical to stop average global temperatures exceeding 1.5C.
2. To urgently protect and help adapt our communities and natural habitats from the destructive effects of climate change. This will involve enabling and encouraging countries affected by climate change to build defences, warning systems and resilient infrastructure to avoid loss of homes and livelihoods.
3. To increase funding to support these aims, making good on the \$100bn annual climate finance goal affirmed through the Paris Agreement. We need to be in a position to unleash the trillions in private and public finance to meet global net zero.
4. To close off the outstanding elements of the Paris Rulebook, and accelerate delivery of the Paris Goals through collaboration between Governments, Businesses and Civil Society.

We will deliver these objectives through a major international engagement programme. We have also put protecting and restoring nature at the heart of our COP26 Presidency. We will encourage increased public and private investment in nature– as well as better alignment of economic decision making and nature. We will encourage countries to re-orientate agricultural policies in favour of the environment, and will continue to work with producer and consumer countries to clean up global commodity supply chains. We will also support countries in fulfilling their commitments in the Leaders Pledge for Nature.

- ***How many FCDO officials are working in the climate diplomacy team and how many of those are working in roles focused on COP26 delivery? Has the FCDO provided diplomats with any training in this area?***

Following the merger of FCDO, we have created a new Climate & Environment Directorate (CED), currently with around 100 staff. The Director and all staff are engaged in various aspects of COP26, galvanising increased global action to tackle the climate crisis and protect nature.

Within CED, the Climate Coordination and Diplomacy Department (CCDD, previously the climate diplomacy team) helps ensure that the FCDO plays a full role in supporting

COP26 with a thoroughly coordinated diplomatic effort. Five members of CCDD are embedded in the International Engagement Team of the COP26 Unit providing a central cross-government point for the tasking and management of work on COP26 across the entire FCDO overseas network. In addition, there are over 25 staff who are working for the COP26 Unit on loan from the FCDO. The Foreign Secretary's Special Representative on Climate Change is embedded within CED, and engaged intensively with COP26 Unit. He and his staff, along with four senior diplomatic appointments as COP26 Regional Ambassadors bring their wealth of experience and diplomatic skills to COP26.

An extensive and varied programme of training has also been provided to the wider diplomatic staff since the start of 2020. This will continue in the months ahead. Given the impact of the pandemic this has taken place online since March 2020 but has been available to the global network as well as to colleagues across government departments. The training has included extensive learning on climate change as well as specialised thematic courses, for example on green finance. These have been supplemented by briefing as well as by live "teach-in" sessions from external experts and colleagues across government (for example from BEIS). The latter have covered a wide range of subjects including UNFCCC negotiations; nature; zero emission vehicles and mobilising private finance for climate change.

• ***What role do the UK's network of climate and energy attachés play in promoting the UK's objectives for COP26? Do the attachés liaise with the international engagement team in the Cabinet Office or liaise solely with the FCDO?***

Climate change is a top priority for all our Heads of Mission and their teams. The COP26 Unit and our Heads of Mission are supported in their climate work by our overseas network of Climate, Energy and Environment Attachés, which numbers around 462 UK diplomatic staff and Country Based Staff (190 Full Time Equivalents). The network brings together the former FCO-BEIS Climate & Energy Attachés network and the former DFID Climate Adviser network. There are both in-country experts, and regional advisors. The network plays a key role interacting with government, business, civil society and other organisations overseas and helping deliver our objectives. The Foreign Secretary, FCDO ministers, senior officials and our Embassies and High Commissions around the world have embedded climate into their international engagement.

The team from CCDD embedded with the International Engagement Team in COP26 Unit ensures that there is an overall framework of engagement and direction set for the overseas network. They ensure centralised commissioning of the network, including through regular communication with the Heads of Mission Calls and more general weekly updates setting out strategy developments and defining priorities for the coming period. We are fully using our IT systems to ensure that the diplomatic network has easy access to all COP26 resources, including communications and protocol/logistics material. Within this framework the FCDO and other key actors in Government can readily access the overseas network to help deliver key COP26 objectives and campaigns.

• ***Many countries have yet to submit more ambitious NDCs, and some large emitters were barred from speaking slots at December's Climate Ambition Summit due to a lack of commitment. What diplomatic steps are you taking to encourage more hesitant countries to increase their levels of ambition?***

We have seen positive progress from a number of countries, including a real step-up on longer-term action towards net zero. With the recent commitment from President Biden's US Administration, countries representing around 65% of global CO₂ emissions and around 70% of the world's economy, have now committed to reaching net zero emissions or carbon neutrality.

Despite the challenges of the COVID pandemic, 52 new or updated NDCs have been formally submitted to the UNFCCC. This covers 79 countries (including the EU and its 27 Member States). In its own NDC, the UK committed to an at least 68% reduction in emissions from 1990 levels by 2030. Internationally, the UK co-hosted Climate Ambition Summit in December last year gave much added momentum to this agenda.

Nevertheless the February UNFCCC initial NDC Synthesis report showed an incomplete but important picture that we are a long way off what is collectively required to close the existing 2030 emissions gap and keep 1.5 degrees within reach. The report serves as a call to action to all countries ahead of COP26.

We are encouraging all countries to make a step change in ambition: both those yet to come forward and those who have yet to increase their ambition. This forms a priority for our international engagement for the Prime Minister; the COP President Designate and Foreign Secretary; UK Ministers and our diplomatic network.

The UK is heavily focused on leveraging the activity and ambition of others, be it countries or the voice of business or civil society. Our whole-of-society and whole-of-economy approach, means that businesses, sub-national governments, regions, cities and civil society will play a high role in increasing ambition : our strategy and campaigns help to facilitate any and all such influence, and our overseas missions act as hubs for such momentum.

On specific country NDCs, we welcome New Zealand, Japan and South Korea committing to revise and increase the targets they submitted last year ahead of COP26. We call upon all countries who have not yet done so to submit ambitious NDCs in line with 1.5 degrees.

- ***Which countries have the FCDO identified as priorities for diplomatic efforts in the lead up to COP26? What is the UK Government doing to engage with these countries? What is the FCDO's strategy for international Ministerial engagements from now until the conference takes place in November?***

Climate change is a global issue and we are working with all countries across the globe on negotiations, action and ambition. The FCDO works closely with the COP26 Unit in the Cabinet Office in particular to engage major emitters; chairs of regional groupings and countries most vulnerable to climate impacts FCDO works hard to ensure that these priorities and wider international engagement are translated into Ministerial calls and diplomatic engagement.

The 2021 calendar includes a number of key milestones ahead of COP26 which will provide momentum on the road to Glasgow. These include the Climate and Development Ministerial (CDM) on 31 March, the US 'Earth Day' Summit on 22 April, the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM) starting 21 June to name a few. All are important opportunities for progress on climate change issues ahead of COP26. The UK will also be using its G7 Presidency to show advanced economic leadership on climate and nature as a crucial stepping stone to the Convention on Biological Diversity COP15 and UNFCCC COP26. The FCDO will continue to pursue its climate change objectives in the majority of Ministerial and senior official-level engagements with other governments.

- ***The US will hold a climate summit of the world's major economies in April. How is the FCDO engaging with the United States and President Biden on COP26 and climate change? How does the US conference fit into***

the UK's strategy for its COP presidency? What role will the FCDO play in preparations for this conference and during the conference itself?

The UK welcomed the US re-joining the Paris Agreement. This move means that the Paris Agreement once again covers almost all global emissions. The US is the world's largest economy. Its commitments to reduce emissions will have a big impact across the world.

We welcome President Biden's Leaders' Climate Summit in April as part of the full calendar of events that will build and maintain momentum up to COP26. The UK and US will be working closely together to ensure that leaders come to the summit with ambitious new commitments on climate to build momentum ahead of the UK-hosted G7 and on to COP26 in Glasgow. These summits are key milestones as part of our intense global diplomatic effort to ensure other countries submit enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions, net zero targets, adaptation communications and climate finance commitments ahead of COP26.

The UK is fully engaging with the US on its welcome and ambitious climate agenda. The Foreign Secretary met the US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, John Kerry, during his visit to London in March and they agreed the Leaders' Climate Summit would play a key role in raising climate ambition around the world ahead of COP26. Additionally, the FS has discussed the UK's ambitions for the G7 and COP26 with Secretary of State Blinken, and the Prime Minister has done the same with President Biden, who, as you know, has listed climate as one of his top priorities. All this is supported with intensive engagement at official level as the new Administration forms up and regular discussions between COP President-Designate and the US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate.

• The UK and Italy are acting as joint presidents of this year's COP. What input is the UK having into the pre-COP events being organised in Milan? How are the Italian Government feeding into arrangements for the main COP26 event taking place in Glasgow?

The UK will hold the Presidency of COP26, working in partnership with co-hosts Italy. We have regular meetings of the UK-Italy COP26 Taskforce, which allows us to coordinate, share information and update one another on progress towards the COP26 Summit and the Pre-COP. This collaboration is a central element of our Partnership.

• How is the UK engaging with the Chilean COP25 Presidency? What role is the Chilean presidency playing in diplomatic negotiations, pre-COP meetings and in preparations for the conference in Glasgow?

As President of COP 25, Chile continues to play a key role on climate change internationally and is an important partner for the UK. Since COP 25, a close partnership has been established between the UK and Chilean COP Presidencies, supported by the deployment of a HMG secondee to the Chilean Environment Ministry. Collaboration has focused on driving increased climate ambition globally as well as progress on the UNFCCC negotiations on the road to Glasgow. Chile partnered the UK and France to deliver the Climate Ambition Summit in December 2020. At the 2020 UN General Assembly, COP 25 President Carolina Schmidt and COP 26 President Designate Alok Sharma made a joint statement calling for more ambitious commitments from countries across mitigation, adaptation and finance. Throughout 2021, Chile and the UK are jointly leading monthly consultations on diverse elements of the climate negotiations with countries' Heads of Delegation. There is also active collaboration between the UK and Chile to promote real economy action, for instance through the 'Race to Zero' and 'Race to Resilience' campaigns. The Foreign Secretary is planning to visit Chile in the coming months, Covid restrictions permitting.

- ***How is COVID-19 impacting diplomatic negotiations in the run up to COP26? What steps are you taking to overcome issues like poor internet access and connectivity to ensure that a diverse range of perspectives are meaningfully included both in the negotiations and the wider summit?***

As a result of COVID and the restrictions facing all of us, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, COP President Designate and UK Ministers and officials across government have all stepped up virtual engagement on climate change, meeting capital-to-capital with over 100 governments on COP26 to date.

Where it has been possible to do so safely and in line with guidance for conducting essential state business outside of the UK, the COP President Designate has made a number of in-person visits, giving him the opportunity to meet ministerial counterparts as well as negotiators for open and honest exchange. These meetings have been complemented by virtual engagement, and near-completion of a comprehensive round of consultations with all UNFCCC negotiating groups.

To maintain momentum in the multilateral discussions last year, the UK organised - together with the UNFCCC Secretariat, Subsidiary Body Chairs, and COP25 Presidency Chile - two major virtual moments to bring negotiating groups and Parties together: June Momentum and the November UNFCCC Climate Change Dialogues.

This year, we must accelerate progress to ensure we arrive in Glasgow having done our homework, and we continue to engage with all Parties to identify how best to do so. We recognise that working across time zones is a key challenge, and we continue to rotate the scheduling of our monthly series of UK-Chile co-hosted multilateral consultations to ensure no regions are disproportionately adversely impacted. We also continue to coordinate closely with the UNFCCC and the UN as they provide assistance and make in-country facilities available for delegations facing challenges with internet connectivity.

Our intent remains to hold an in-person summit this year, respecting the wishes of parties, many of whom feel strongly that COPs should be conducted in person; action on climate change cannot be delayed.

We continue to monitor the situation, including recent developments on vaccines, and will adapt our plans to adopt the most appropriate preventative measures at the most appropriate time. In doing so, we remain mindful of our commitment to an inclusive COP.

In addition to contingency planning, we are also considering how we can build on new ways of working and advances in technology to enhance participation and inclusivity. The world of virtual events is moving fast and we need to be open to learning and adapting plans as lessons are learnt. We will work closely with all our partners to consider what the right virtual offer could be for COP26 to maximise participation. While this presents opportunities, we recognise the very strong view among parties of the imperative of in-person negotiations and that remains our focus.

- ***How does the FCDO intend to maintain momentum on this issue beyond November 2021? What is the FCDO's long-term environmental diplomacy strategy? What commitment has the FCDO been given by HM Treasury that funding support will continue to be available to sustain the promises made?***

A critical step under the Government's Integrated Review was to clearly state that, "addressing climate change and biodiversity loss will remain the UK's number one international priority in 2021, and beyond". Over the last year and in the coming months, we are of course heavily focused on COP26. But climate and environmental

challenges will only grow, everywhere in the world, and we are committed to keeping this agenda at the heart of our stance, internationally, into the long term, and evolving our strategy to reflect this commitment. We are already engaging the new US Administration closely in order to ensure leverage and alignment. Our own and others' net zero pathways will present extraordinary economic and scientific opportunities which must be integrated in our approach. We will engage HM Treasury in the normal way on future funding, recognising there is consensus across Whitehall on both the urgency and opportunity around climate and the environment.

The UK's Presidency of COP runs until November 2022, when COP27 will be hosted by an African nation. The UK will continue to use multilateral and bilateral forums to help ensure that goals are met and progressed and to make the most of a genuine green recovery from the economic challenges brought about by Covid-19 globally. The PM committed to a doubling of UK ICF to £11.6bn between 2021/22 and 2025/26 in September 2019 and this commitment was reiterated in the 2020 spending review and in HMG's Integrated Review. We are in the process of integrating climate and biodiversity as a priority throughout the FCDO's work. We are aligning all UK ODA to the Paris Climate Agreement and nature proofing all spend. And we are actively engaging our bilateral and multilateral partners to adopt a similarly ambitious approach.

Supporting this vision beyond 2021, the FCDO's network of climate, energy and environment attachés and advisers is world leading and remains the FCDO's largest thematic network. We are aiming to revise and strengthen the system of accreditation to the professional body of technical advisers spanning climate, energy, and environment. We will continue to boost our existing capability on climate, energy, and environment by building the knowledge and skills of our wider diplomatic network through the formal learning structure offered by the International Academy (FCDO's flagship learning and development hub) and by a wider learning and development offer.



Foreign Affairs Committee

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From the Chair
Tom Tugendhat MP

Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
King Charles Street
London
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United Kingdom

23 March 2021

Dear Foreign Secretary

We look forward to the UK hosting the 26th UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP26). The summit is widely considered to be the most significant UN climate summit since Paris in 2015. COP26 will provide a moment to bring world leaders and experts together to call for increased ambition and to assess the pace of progress.

As president of COP26, the UK will play a critical role in encouraging Paris signatories to present more ambitious Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) climate pledges. The FCDO has a pivotal role in meeting this considerable diplomatic challenge. In order to help us assess how this work is progressing, as part of our ongoing inquiry into environmental diplomacy, we would be grateful if you could provide answers to the following questions:

- What is the minimum outcome that would need to be secured at COP26 for the FCDO to consider the conference a success? Will the Government be setting out more detailed objectives for the summit?
- How many FCDO officials are working in the climate diplomacy team and how many of those are working in roles focused on COP26 delivery? Has the FCDO provided diplomats with any training in this area?
- What role do the UK's network of climate and energy attaches play in promoting the UK's objectives for COP26? Do the attaches liaise with the international engagement team in the Cabinet Office or liaise solely with the FCDO?
- Many countries have yet to submit more ambitious NDCs, and some large emitters were barred from speaking slots at December's Climate Ambition Summit due to a lack of commitment. What diplomatic steps are you taking to encourage more hesitant countries to increase their levels of ambition?
- Which countries have the FCDO identified as priorities for diplomatic efforts in the lead up to COP26? What is the UK Government doing to engage with these countries? What is the FCDO's strategy for international Ministerial engagements from now until the conference takes place in November?
- The US will hold a climate summit of the world's major economies in April. How is the FCDO engaging with the United States and President Biden on COP26 and climate change? How does the US conference fit into the UK's strategy for its COP presidency? What role will the FCDO play in preparations for this conference and during the conference itself?

- The UK and Italy are acting as joint presidents of this year's COP. What input is the UK having into the pre-COP events being organised in Milan? How are the Italian Government feeding into arrangements for the main COP26 event taking place in Glasgow?
- How is the UK engaging with the Chilean COP25 Presidency? What role is the Chilean presidency playing in diplomatic negotiations, pre-COP meetings and in preparations for the conference in Glasgow?
- How is COVID-19 impacting diplomatic negotiations in the run up to COP26? What steps are you taking to overcome issues like poor internet access and connectivity to ensure that a diverse range of perspectives are meaningfully included both in the negotiations and the wider summit?
- How does the FCDO intend to maintain momentum on this issue beyond November 2021? What is the FCDO's long-term environmental diplomacy strategy? What commitment has the FCDO been given by HM Treasury that funding support will continue to be available to sustain the promises made?

I would appreciate your response by 6 April. I intend to place your response in the public domain.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom Tugendhat', with a stylized flourish underneath.

TOM TUGENDHAT MP