



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

The Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP
Secretary of State
Department for Business,
Energy & Industrial Strategy
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EH

The Chair
Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

T +44 (0) 20 7215 5000
E enquiries@beis.gov.uk
W www.gov.uk

16 April 2020

Dear Chair,

I am writing in response to letters from Rachel Reeves as former BEIS Select Committee Chair, to letters she wrote to the Prime Minister dated 4 February and to me on 25 February. I would like to take the opportunity to respond to the Committee.

As you will now be aware, the COP26 UN climate change conference due to take place in Glasgow this November has been postponed.

The world is currently facing an unprecedented global challenge and countries are rightly focusing their efforts on saving lives and fighting COVID-19. In light of the ongoing, global impacts, holding an ambitious, inclusive COP26 in November 2020 is no longer possible.

Dates for a rescheduled conference in 2021, hosted by the UK in partnership with Italy, will be set out in due course following further discussions with parties.

This decision to postpone has been taken by representatives of the COP Bureau of the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), with the UK and its Italian partners.

By rescheduling, we will ensure all parties can focus on the issues to be discussed at this vital conference and allow more time for the necessary preparations to take place.

I set out below my response to the Committee's questions, and I hope the Committee finds the information helpful. I look forward to further engaging with you and others across government, industry and civil society.

- 1. Can you confirm who will be taking forward the role of COP26 President? What qualities will you be seeking when making this key appointment?**

As confirmed by the Prime Minister, I will be President of COP26.

- 2. Which Department will be responsible and accountable for COP26 actions? How will you ensure that the Department is able to drive forward plans across the Whitehall machinery?**

We will continue working tirelessly across Government and with our international partners to deliver the ambition needed to tackle the climate crisis. The Prime Minister wants the UK to continue to lead the world on tackling climate change and COP26 with a Cabinet Minister as President is a central part of that vision. I will therefore be responsible for our COP26 work.

3. What assurances can you provide that you will not cause further disruption to the COP process?

We are working very closely with the UNFCCC, our Italian partners, other countries and a broad range of stakeholders in planning towards COP26. I have met with former COP Presidents at Wilton Park and launched the COP26 finance strategy on the 27 February, alongside incoming Climate Finance Advisor, Mark Carney. On 6 March I provided a briefing to member states at the UN and on 20 March confirmed the UK as the first co-chair at the inaugural meeting of the India-led Governing Council on CDRI (Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure). As COP26 President, and as Secretary of State for Business and Energy, I will continue to work with all those involved to drive climate ambition, build resilience and lower emissions. COVID-19 has reduced the scope for in-person international meetings, but we are still engaging as far as possible through other means such as video and phone conferences. I look forward to agreeing a new date for the conference.

4. Will you be endorsing and pushing ahead with Claire O'Neill's seven-point Action Plan for COP26?

A key objective for COP26 is to make progress in a number of priority areas including adaptation and resilience, nature-based solutions, energy transition, clean road transport and finance. We will continue to work across Government and with our international partners to drive greater climate ambition.

5. How are you involving Scotland - and other devolved nations - in the COP process? Can you detail what role the Scottish First Minister will be offered in the run up to and during COP26?

We are working closely with all our operational Scottish partners, including Police Scotland and Glasgow City Council. The UK Government is committed to working with the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive to ensure that we host an inclusive, ambitious and successful summit for the whole of the UK. The policing and security assurance board has representation from all the relevant parties and will oversee policing costs.

6. Why hasn't there been a single climate cabinet meeting since the COP Delivery Unit was set up?

The Cabinet Committee on Climate Action held a very constructive meeting on 4 March. The Prime Minister demonstrated his focus on climate action on Tuesday 4 February, launching the Year of Climate Action.

7. When will the first Cabinet sub-committee on climate take place?

The first Cabinet of 2020 had a strong climate change focus, and The Cabinet Committee on Climate Action had a very constructive meeting on 4 March.



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