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The Rt Hon. The Baroness Parminter
Chair, Environment and Climate Change
Committee
House of Lords
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14 December 2021

Dear Baroness Parminter,

Thank you for your letter of 29 October, regarding the delivery of COP26 across Government, and for your continued support as we move into the Presidency year and build on our progress in Glasgow.

I have responded to your questions below, which I hope the committee will find helpful:

1. What plans does the Government have to:

- a. Strengthen mechanisms for holding departments to account for developing climate-credible policies;**
- b. Review the machinery of Government in place for climate change decision-making?**

The Prime Minister chairs the Climate Action Strategy Committee (CAS), and I chair the Climate Action Implementation Committee (CAI), which provides two important ministerial forums for identifying and resolving key trade-offs and holding departments to account. The CAI Committee, which I chair, is responsible for facilitating agreement between Ministers on policy related to our COP26 Presidency, net zero and building the United Kingdom's resilience to climate impacts.

These committees are supported by official level governance structures, including a cross-government Director General group that was established in 2019 to ensure a whole-of-government approach to climate policy. Chaired by the BEIS Director General for Net Zero and International, this group brings together officials from across Government to support the delivery of climate change policy, including those contained in the recently published Net Zero Strategy.

BEIS is the lead department for net zero across the government, and is responsible for the overall delivery of net zero. Their work on net zero delivery is supported by the No10 Delivery Unit. The Prime Minister also chairs the Government Priorities Delivery Committee to drive progress and accountability on the delivery of his priority missions, one of which is net zero.

BEIS works closely with key delivery departments to coordinate the decarbonisation of the whole economy. These include:

- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: is responsible for reducing emissions from agriculture, land use (including peat), fluorinated greenhouse gases and waste / wastewater, whilst also increasing England's carbon sequestration potential through our forestry policies and protecting the marine environment.
- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: has a shared responsibility with BEIS on the decarbonisation of buildings; and for improving the energy efficiency and carbon emissions of new homes and buildings, including through the implementation of the Future Homes Standard (FHS) and the Future Buildings Standard from 2025.
- HM Treasury: is responsible for environmental taxation and for green finance, particularly financial sector regulation, international financial institutions, and ensuring decarbonisation policy maximises sustainable economic growth and value for money for consumers and taxpayers. HM Treasury also has joint responsibility with BEIS for emissions trading/carbon pricing.
- Department for Transport: is responsible for decarbonisation of transport, including facilitating the development of zero emissions options for difficult to decarbonise transport modes such as aviation, maritime and heavy road freight.

The Climate Change Committee (CCC) also plays a key role in advising the Government on setting and meeting our carbon budgets. The committee advises on the level of each budget, the respective contributions that different sectors could make and the extent to which carbon budgets could be met through the use of permitted "flexibilities" (such as surpluses from previous carbon budgets or the purchase of good quality international carbon credits). The Net Zero Strategy is the means by which we satisfy the requirements of the Act in relation to policies and proposals for meeting the current carbon budgets. As set out in the Strategy, the Government has also committed to publish an update on progress against a set of key indicators for achieving our climate goals on an annual basis.

2. Are the two relevant Cabinet Committees expected to continue in the long-term, and what plans does the Government have to increase transparency around their proceedings?

The two climate change Cabinet Committees, established in 2019, will continue to drive action across Government towards these commitments.

With respect to Committee frequency and transparency, it is a long-established precedent that information about the discussions that have taken place in Cabinet and its Committees, and how often they have met, is not normally shared publicly.

3. What assessment has the Government made of the staffing and analytical expertise (related to climate change) currently available across departments, and of likely future demand?

Much of the Government's analytical expertise on climate change sits within BEIS. As set out in the Net Zero Strategy, the UK Government has established the Government Skills and Curriculum Unit (GSCU) to oversee the delivery of better training, knowledge and networks that the over 440,000 people working in the Civil Service will need today and in the future.

Net zero will continue to be a priority for the UK Government. BEIS and GSCU are reviewing the skills, training and networks that civil servants need to lead the UK's future efforts to decarbonise.

We are expanding the curriculum for civil servants to include specific training on climate change. We are also establishing climate specific training within the Civil Service Fast Stream curriculum.

In addition we have embedded climate considerations in the Policy Profession Standards, the competency framework that supports professional development for all civil servants developing policy. For the first time, this makes explicit that good policy making requires an awareness of the potential for all policy areas to contribute to or undermine our climate goal.

4. What are the key milestones for the Treasury's efforts to consider the carbon impacts of fiscal events, and what plans does the Government have to publish more information regarding the carbon impacts of public spending?

HM Treasury recognises that fiscal events are key opportunities to ensure that climate change is appropriately prioritised in decision-making.

The Embedding Net Zero in Government chapter in the Net Zero Strategy sets out how the Government will monitor progress to ensure we stay on track for our emissions targets. It includes a commitment to ensure that decisions taken on government spending are informed by their impact on meeting net zero.

The Green Book, which provides guidance on how to appraise and evaluate policies, projects and programmes, mandates the consideration of climate and environmental impacts in spending and was updated in 2018 to take fuller account of the natural capital impacts of policy proposals. It was updated further in 2020 to emphasise that policies must be developed and assessed against how well they deliver on the Government's long-term policy aims such as net zero.

At the Spending Review 2021 (SR21) investment decisions were informed by data and evidence on the expected contribution of proposals to meeting net zero carbon emissions by 2050. They were also assessed within the context of the broader suite of policies set out in the Net Zero Strategy.

5. In your view, what outcomes have been achieved at COP26 in relation to the Government's four priority areas of coal, cars, cash, and trees, and what are your main disappointments?

COP26 concluded with all 197 Parties agreeing to the Glasgow Climate Pact, which keeps 1.5°C alive and finalised the outstanding elements of the Paris Rulebook. The Glasgow Climate Pact is the first time that coal power and fossil fuels have been referenced in a COP text. This is an unprecedented achievement.

Under the UK Presidency, countries have accelerated the phase-out of coal power, committed to halt and reverse forest loss, sped up the switch to electric vehicles and begun to address methane emissions. Key achievements under the four priorities include:

- **Coal:** Alongside the commitment from all parties to phase down the use of coal, 64 countries committed to coal phase out, including 4 of the world's top 20 coal power generating countries: South Korea, Indonesia, Vietnam and Poland. All major coal financing countries committed to end international coal finance by the end of 2021, with \$20 billion in funding to support the coal to clean power transition which was announced at COP26.
- **Cars:** A third of the global car market and some of the world's largest car makers, including General Motors, Ford and Volvo, committed to make all new car sales zero emission globally by 2040 and by 2035 in leading markets.
- **Cash:** Under the UK's Presidency, 95% of the largest developed country climate finance providers made new, forward-looking commitments, with many doubling or even quadrupling their support for developing countries to take climate action. These pledges mean that the \$100 billion finance goal will be met by developed countries by 2023 at the latest and \$500 billion is expected to be mobilised over 2021 - 2025. In addition, over \$350 million was committed to the Adaptation Fund, the highest single mobilisation to the Fund and nearly triple the most successful one previously. Over \$600 million was pledged to the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Fund, also the highest collective mobilisation the fund has seen.
- **Trees:** Over 140 leaders, representing over 90% of the world's forests, have pledged to halt and reverse forest loss by 2030, backed by almost £14 billion of public and private funding. 45 nations have pledged urgent action and investment to protect nature and shift to more sustainable ways of farming. Over 100 countries have now signed up to protect at least 30% of the global ocean by 2030.

6. What are your priorities for the duration of the UK's UNFCCC Presidency, and how have these been affected by the COP26 outcome?

The Glasgow Climate Pact, combined with increased ambition and action from countries, means that 1.5C remains in sight, but it will only be delivered with concerted and immediate global efforts. The Pact called for countries to revisit and strengthen their 2030 targets, as necessary, by the end of 2022 in order to secure the urgent action required this decade. We will continue to use the remainder of our COP26 Presidency to work with countries as they revisit and strengthen their 2030 targets to align with Paris temperature goals.

We will also build on the progress made at COP26 on adaptation and loss and damage, pushing forward work on the Glasgow-Sharm el-Sheikh Work Programme on the Global Goal on Adaptation, and the Glasgow Dialogue on Loss and Damage ahead of COP27. Finance will remain a key issue, and we will continue to work with donors to close the 2022 gap on the \$100bn.

The UK will continue to galvanise international climate action throughout our Presidency year. We will work closely with all partners, but in particular the incoming COP27 Presidency Egypt, COP28 Presidency UAE, G7 Presidency Germany and G20 Presidency Indonesia to ensure commitments and agreements made at COP26 are delivered.

7. What is the Government doing to anticipate the issues arising from global warming above 1.5°C domestically, and how will adaptation be taken forward at a global level through the rest of the UK's UNFCCC Presidency?

The responsibility for domestic adaptation planning sits within the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. In November 2018, the UK published a new set of UK Climate Projections (UKCP18), which informs DEFRA's adaptation and mitigation planning and decision-making. The UKCP18 was updated in 2019 to include local level climate projections, providing high resolution 2.2km projections for the UK. In 2020, the projections were further enhanced to incorporate the future likelihood of certain extreme weather events. The projections will help improve businesses and individuals' understanding of climate risks, encouraging them to take measures to strengthen their resilience.

At COP26, parties agreed to launch the 2 year Glasgow - Sharm el Sheikh Work Programme on the Global Goal on Adaptation (GlaSS). This is a significant step forward which will deliver action to reduce vulnerability, strengthen resilience and increase the capacity of people and the planet to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

On adaptation finance, we have collectively gone further than previous COPs, with new progress on supporting developing countries, including by at least doubling financing for adapting to the effects of climate change by 2025 from a baseline of \$20bn in 2019 to \$40bn a year by 2025.

Throughout the UK's Presidency year, we will work with the UNFCCC Secretariat and Egypt to convene Parties to deliver on the agreed outcomes in the Glasgow Climate Pact.

8. What adaptation and crisis planning processes are in place across and between departments and with other bodies, such as civil society groups, for issues arising from global warming above 1.5°C?

The UK's third National Adaptation Programme, to be published by DEFRA in 2023, will respond to and address these risks, and build a more resilient nation.

We are also looking to our future preparedness and through the new National Resilience Strategy we will strengthen our response to risks to the whole of society, including the impacts of climate change, both now and in the future.

The Government uses the National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA) to assess the most serious risks to the UK and its interests overseas, including natural hazards, malicious threats, societal risks, industrial accidents and human and animal health risks.

The NSRA is updated regularly to ensure that decision makers, government departments, Arms Length Bodies, devolved administrations and local responders are provided with the latest understanding of the risk landscape as it develops. The NSRA forms the basis of public communications including the National Risk Register.

9. After COP26, how will the Government promote links between the UNFCCC and CBD throughout its UNFCCC Presidency?

The Government remains committed to playing a leading role in developing the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and is supportive of ambitious global targets to bend the curve of biodiversity loss by 2030. This includes targets to ensure more ocean and land is protected, ecosystems are restored, recovery of species population sizes takes place and that extinctions are halted by 2050.

The UK is advocating for the protection of at least 30% of land and ocean, globally and at home, by 2030. In support of this target, the UK leads the Global Ocean Alliance (GOA) and is the Ocean Co-Chair (alongside France and Costa Rica) of the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People (HAC). While the GOA champions 30by30 for the ocean, the HAC champions 30by30 for both the land and ocean. Between the GOA and the HAC and in combination with other initiatives, over 100 countries now support 30by30 in the ocean.

10. How is the Government making use of the opportunity presented by the delay to COP15 to work with China to ensure it is a success?

As hosts of COP26, the UK is in a unique position to work with CBD COP15 hosts China, to reinforce and amplify the linkages between climate change and biodiversity and to help deliver the step-change needed to tackle these global issues.

We are working with our Chinese counterparts, and with the UNFCCC, biodiversity (CBD) and desertification (CCD) conventions through the Rio Conventions Linkages initiative to strengthen the links between these conventions to deliver key outcomes for nature.

The strong political will to act was evident at Part 1 of COP15, which was attended by a number of world leaders including members of the G20, and which saw announcements on new biodiversity funds for supporting developing countries. Ministers from around the globe attended, focusing attention on the further action needed to achieve the transformative outcomes required to set us on the path in Kunming next year to halt and reverse biodiversity loss.

11. What are the main lessons learnt from the Government's public engagement around COP26, and how will these be taken forward in future public engagement on climate change and nature?

The UK Government's public engagement on COP26 was driven through the "Together for our Planet" campaign. The campaign sought to raise awareness of COP26, its objectives, and to showcase how people across the UK are taking steps to tackle climate change. A full evaluation of the campaign is still being compiled, and detailed learnings will be formalised and shared across government in due course.

The campaign included a number of initiatives specifically designed to engage young people in COP26 and wider climate change issues. The COP26 Schools Pack, which was sent to almost 30,000 schools across the country, helps schools to develop and celebrate their own young climate leaders. The campaign also engaged thousands of people across the country by celebrating the stories of 26 #OneStepGreener

Ambassadors who represent the best of UK climate leadership. The use of diverse stories and voices was a key driver of success for the campaign, and will be amplified in future communications.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Alok Sharma', written over the printed name.

The Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP
COP President