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COP President
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The Rt Hon Philip Dunne MP,
Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee
House of Commons,
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24 January 2022

Dear Philip,

Thank you for your letter of 23 December, regarding the outcomes from COP26, implications for UK climate policy, and our priorities for the UK COP Presidency up to COP27 in November 2022. I have responded to your questions below, which I hope the committee will find helpful:

1. Coordination of the Climate Action Strategy, Climate Action Implementation, Government Priorities Delivery committees

Placing climate at the centre of government decision-making is vital to ensure the UK remains on track to achieving net zero emissions. Our governance is a critical way that we understand the links between net zero and other priorities.

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 CAS Committee sets the overall framework of what we are doing and aiming to deliver as part of net zero.

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. It seeks to push forward policies and frameworks agreed at the CAS Committee to deliver on those top line commitments. The Net Zero Strategy came as a result of the co-ordinated work that was done in the CAI Committee.

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.

The Net Zero Strategy is a shared plan with each department playing its role and Secretary of States accountable to Parliament, and the climate committees assessing progress in the round. However, the BEIS Secretary of State continues to hold overall responsibility and leadership for net zero.

2. Emissions Reductions Projections from Net Zero Strategy

The Net Zero Strategy outlines measures to transition to a green and sustainable future, helping businesses and consumers to move to clean power, supporting hundreds of thousands of well-paid jobs and leveraging up to £90 billion of private investment by 2030.

The Net Zero Strategy sets out our plan for transitioning to a net zero economy and society by 2050, including the action we will take to keep on track for meeting our carbon budgets up to and including Carbon Budget 6, as well as our 2030 Nationally Determined Contribution.

Each year BEIS publishes updated energy and emissions projections (EEPs), analysing and projecting future energy use and greenhouse gas emissions in the UK. BEIS will publish an updated set of Energy and Emissions projections in due course. This will set out emissions reductions from those specific Net Zero Strategy measures where decisions on design of the associated individual policy intervention are sufficiently advanced to meet EEP publication standards.

In addition to this, in October the Net Zero Strategy set out a **new annual commitment** to provide a public update on progress in delivering net zero. BEIS expects to publish the first of these later this year.

Regarding the specific Environmental Information Request, these are matters for the Business Secretary. In reaching the original decision, officials inform me that due consideration of the public interest test was taken and BEIS made the decision to withhold the information on the basis that it invokes the Environmental Information Regulations exception at 12(4)(e) 'internal communications'.

BEIS were of the view that disclosing the information in the spreadsheet would affect a 'safe space' for policy development and releasing the information would risk damaging the internal decision-making process. In addition, they considered the requested information should not be disclosed in order to protect effective commercial discussions and decisions within the Government relating to the scope of future policy development.

Given this, on balance, it remains in the public interest not to disclose this information at this point in time, to prevent any negative impacts on the quality of future policy development.

Should you require any further information, I encourage you to write to BEIS Ministers.

3. Climate reporting under the UN Transparency Framework

Current UK reporting to the UNFCCC

The UK Government currently submits three reports to the UNFCCC, following the requirements established under the Convention:

- A Greenhouse Gas emissions inventory every year. This includes detailed information on the UK's greenhouse gas emissions dating back to 1990.
- A biennial report every two years. This contains information on progress towards achieving our emission reduction targets and the policies and measures we have taken to address climate change, including support provided to developing countries.
- A National Communication every 4 years. This report contains additional information on adaptation, research and systematic observations and education, training and public awareness. When due in the same year, the biennial report is submitted within the National Communication.

By 31 December 2024, Parties will transition to a new Enhanced Transparency Framework for reporting on their individual progress towards the goals of the Paris Agreement. New reporting documents developed under the Enhanced Transparency Framework will supersede the Convention Greenhouse Gas emissions inventory and biennial report. National Communications will continue to be submitted.

Agreement at COP26

Through negotiations on the Enhanced Transparency Framework at COP26, Parties adopted:

- **Common reporting tables for the electronic reporting of national inventory reports.** Sixty tables for Parties' annual reporting of greenhouse gas emissions, covering seven gases across five sectors. These tables are based on the existing Greenhouse Gas emissions Inventory tables used by

Annex I Parties to report under the Convention.

- **Common tabular formats for the electronic reporting of information necessary to track progress of nationally determined contributions (NDCs).** Thirteen entirely new tables for reporting information necessary to track progress for implementing and achieving NDCs. Through these tables, Parties will indicate progress made against targets with self-selected indicators, account for internationally transferred mitigation outcomes, as relevant to their NDC, and assess whether the NDC is achieved.
- **Common tabular formats for electronic reporting of information on financial, technology development and transfer and capacity building support.** Thirteen tables to report on support, including support provided and mobilised by developed countries (building on existing tables) and support needed and received by developing countries (the first time this information will be reported).
- **Reporting outlines for the biennial transparency report, national inventory document and technical expert review.** The structure of reporting documents that Parties are encouraged to use.
- **A training programme for technical experts.** Details of the training programme to be developed, which will be used to train technical experts to review Parties' biennial transparency reports.

The reporting tools and products that Parties will use for reporting under the Enhanced Transparency Framework must now be developed by the UNFCCC Secretariat. This should be completed by June 2024, in time for Parties to submit their first biennial transparency report by 31 December 2024 at the latest.

Much of the information that the UK will be required to report under the Enhanced Transparency Framework is already submitted by the UK to meet our existing obligations. However, some new information will be required, including on how the UK is making progress to meet its NDC.

4. Technologies for net zero

There are different views among experts on the extent to which achieving global net zero will require technologies that are not currently mature. However, most agree that some amount of further development will be required. The International Energy Agency (IEA) provides one authoritative and comprehensive view of the action needed to achieve net zero in the energy system by 2050. Their perspective on

technology development in this scenario is as follows:

“Technologies that are available on the market today provide nearly all of the emissions reductions required to 2030 in the [IEA’s] Net Zero Emissions Scenario to put the world on track for net-zero emissions by 2050. However, reaching net-zero emissions will require the widespread use after 2030 of technologies that are still under development today. In 2050, almost 50% of CO2 emissions reductions in the Net Zero Emissions Scenario come from technologies currently at demonstration or prototype stage.”¹

This does not imply that the needed technologies do not exist, but rather that more time and investment is required to make them ready to deploy at scale. Additionally, exact technology mixes by country will depend on national circumstances.

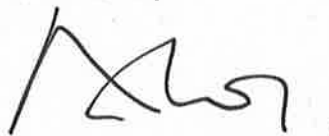
The UK’s experience in offshore wind, and global experience with solar and wind power, shows that progress in clean technology cost reduction and deployment can significantly outpace expectations. Few if any analysts expected the cost of offshore wind power in the UK to fall by 70% within a decade. We now calculate that our electricity generated by offshore wind will be almost half the cost of that generated by new gas by 2030. Global deployment of solar PV in 2020 was ten times higher than experts had forecast fifteen years before.

If countries work together in each sector, we can innovate faster, create stronger incentives for investment, and benefit from larger economies of scale. This could greatly accelerate progress towards net zero emissions in the global economy.

At COP26 we launched the Breakthrough Agenda, signed by over 50 countries, to accelerate the development and deployment of the clean technologies and sustainable solutions needed to meet our Paris Agreement goals.

The Breakthrough Agenda will bring about stronger international collaboration in each emitting sector, including public-private collaboration and the mobilisation of finance at scale, to make the global transition to a clean economy faster, lower cost and more accessible for all.

Yours sincerely,



The Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP
COP President

¹ IEA(2021), Net Zero by 2050, <https://www.iea.org/reports/net-zero-by-2050>