

UK Statement on Climate Change

UN ESCAP Commission Session – 24/5/22

Thank you Chair. I am sorry I cannot be there in person today

Distinguished delegates, on behalf of the UK, who holds the COP26 Presidency I wanted to discuss the challenge of climate change.

The world faces a perfect storm of individually devastating events making global geopolitics incredibly challenging.

We have endured a devastating Pandemic.

And now, Russia has launched an illegal and brutal invasion of Ukraine.

Although it is not my focus today, I want to be clear that this invasion of Ukraine violates international law and the UN Charter.

As a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council, Russia has a particular responsibility to uphold international peace and security. Instead, it has violated the borders of another country and its actions are causing widespread suffering.

The UK stands united with partners in condemning Russia's outrageous attack on Ukraine as a clear breach of international law and the UN Charter

This invasion has created what the IMF has called "a crisis on top of a crisis".

At the same time it has led to inflation rising and growth forecasts reducing.

So the question is, what does this compounding of crises mean for international climate politics.

Quite simply we cannot afford to reduce our focus on tackling climate change. The threat is too large and too immediate.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's latest report is clear - global emissions must peak before 2025 and must all but halve by 2030.

The war in Ukraine and rising energy prices have made energy security a priority, but this cannot come at the expense of our future.

And, indeed, if we respond by reducing reliance on fossil fuels, for which the price is unpredictable, it can even help to assure our future.

In the UK, it is leading us to accelerate our deployment of wind, solar, nuclear and hydrogen energy.

Our target is to be 100% carbon free in our electricity mix by 2035.

Because increasingly, moving to net zero emissions, is a matter of energy as well as climate security.

Here in Asia and the Pacific we hope that we can support each other through the UN as we take urgent action to address climate change.

This region lies at the heart of the climate change challenge but also at the heart of our efforts to find a solution.

Some of the countries that are most vulnerable to climate change are here.

These include not only the island states of the Pacific and Indian oceans, but also the low-lying coastal countries of South and South East Asia and the nations facing desertification across Central Asia.

But Asia with its growing and innovative economies is also the solution – delivering so many of the technological advances we need on renewables (think of solar panels) and being central to our efforts to curb global emissions.

The Glasgow Climate Pact

Last year, the Glasgow Climate Pact kept alive the possibility of limiting the average rise in global temperature to 1.5 degrees celsius.

It called on countries to phase-down unabated coal power and phase-out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies.

It contains big commitments on climate mitigation, on adaptation and on finance.

And it also sets out a way forward on the crucial issue of loss and damage.

But these commitments mean nothing unless we turn them into action.

And this global challenge will require a global solution.

One that can only be achieved through collaboration, cooperation, and support.

In the UK we stand ready to partner with the Members of ESCAP as we seek together to meet these commitments

And we look forward to working through the UN ESCAP community to tackle the challenge of climate change.

Thank you.