



The Rt. Hon. Alok Sharma MP
COP26 President
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London SW1A 2AS

5 June 2022

Dear COP26 President

Urgent need to 'pick up the pace' on NDCs and Net Zero commitments, adaptation, loss and damage, financing and delivery

Half-term report on UK's Presidency of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26)

I am writing to share Clean Air in London's (CAL's) 89-page half-term report on the UK's Presidency of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) following your many remarkable achievements in Glasgow. The report includes 495 references with weblinks.

You may remember that CAL wrote to you initially about COP26 on 8 March 2021. CAL followed that letter with three major reports to the Parliamentary Super Committee on COP26, you and others:

- Version 1.0 sent to Tom Tugendhat MP on 9 May 2021
- Version 2.0 sent to Sarah Champion MP on 14 July 2021
- Version 3.0 sent to you on 6 October 2021

The letters and reports can be seen here: <https://cleanair.london/sources/unccc/>.

CAL has used open-source intelligence to understand progress made by each of the G20 countries and selected others since COP26. This research was undertaken up to and including 15 May 2022 and complements CAL's earlier reports. In addition, CAL has used Sprout Social Listening to analyse all 17.6 million tweets and 62.6 million engagements globally relating to air pollution and/or climate change and 20 themes between 16 November 2020 and 15 May 2022 inclusive i.e. some 18 months.

Please note that CAL edited and produced its 'Half-term report on COP26' and is responsible for the opinions and facts within it and previous reports, including omissions but excluding third party links.

1. COP26 half-term report

CAL's latest report has sought to capture the essence of progress made in G20 countries half-way through the UK's formal Presidency of COP26. The report summarises media narratives and entities around the following areas:

1.1. New Nationally Determined Contributions and Net Zero Commitments

Have countries published new NDCs? Have they made a new commitment to achieve Net Zero where none existed or set an earlier date? Have they strengthened their 2030 emissions reduction targets as necessary?

1.2. Adaptation and loss and damage

Are countries offering to contribute more money to double adaptation finance by 2025 and make progress towards the Global Goal on Adaptation? Has the Glasgow Dialogue on loss and damage been progressed and what's being done to operationalise the Santiago Network, including its funding before COP27?

1.3. Finance

Are G20 countries offering more money to implement the delivery plan on the \$100bn a year in international climate finance for developing countries and make progress on the post-2025 climate finance goal? Adaptation finance is considered part of the total commitment for climate finance.

1.4. Delivery

Have countries followed through on their commitments in Glasgow e.g. turned aims and pledges into laws, policies and practical plans e.g. to phase down or end coal? Have they made progress on new NDCs or Net Zero or to end deforestation, quit coal or cut methane emissions?

1.5. Countries

G20 countries analysed are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union. CAL has also analysed Bangladesh (as chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF)) and Barbados (as a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) and leading advocate of climate action). A list of these countries and their territorial emissions in 2020 is shown in Appendix One.

2. Results

In October 2021, CAL predicted that COP26 would be "good but not good enough". In many ways that prediction was correct, despite your many remarkable achievements in Glasgow.

As mentioned above, CAL's fourth report (Version 4.0) pulls together an overview of the G20 countries and the actions and policies they have taken and announced since COP26.

The G20 focus was chosen because it is a strategic multilateral platform connecting the world's major developed and emerging economies. Together, G20 members represent more than 80% of the world GDP, 75% of international trade, 60% of the world's population and 75% of territorial emissions in 2020. Indonesia holds the G20 Presidency in 2022.

Each entry in this COP26 Half-term Report provides a summary of the above themes, looking in particular at whether governments are delivering on pledges they made at COP26 and the issues of NDCs, Net Zero commitments, adaptation, loss and damage and financing. It also looks at the extent, focus and tone of media reporting on these topics, including social media. In the case of the European Union, CAL has broadly summarised the bloc's policy. Responses to it are included in individual European country entries. The COP26 Report also includes Bangladesh and Barbados.

Key trends noted in the responses of these countries are as follows:

2.1. Action on pledges, delivery, NDCs and Net Zero commitments

- Few countries have taken significant or decisive action since COP26 to implement pledges made at the summit.
- Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the potential loss of its provision of natural gas and fertiliser to other countries has become a significant factor that could alter policies and actions for energy consumers in Europe, particularly in Germany and Italy, but also for providers in other countries such as Canada and Saudi Arabia. It also has implications for the mining of minerals in countries like Brazil. Concerns about food shortages and financial security are also increasing.
- In several places – Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and South Africa for example – continuing crises such as wildfires, droughts and floods may also change minds – though several commentators also note that so far they have not done so.
- Governments may claim they are making progress but environmental organisations monitoring their actions say that most are still failing to do enough, with the energy industry being cited most frequently for having too much influence.

2.2. Adaptation, loss and damage and financing

- The issues of adaptation tend to be talked about in broader considerations about financing.
- Little new has been reported on loss and damage, though existing grievances over richer countries' reluctance to commit to funding these is still noted.
- In developing countries, Bangladesh in particular, there is a continued focus on the lack of clarity on how their transitions to cleaner energy will be financed.
- Among the top donor countries, such as Germany and Canada, there is concern as to whether climate financing is growing despite the G7's reaffirmation of its pledge to the \$100bn of funding per year through to 2025 for vulnerable countries. This goal might be met by 2023.

- Some countries, such as Turkey, also continue to question why they should feature on the UNFCCC's list of developed rather than developing countries.
- Discussions of funding in poorer countries are underpinned with the question of why they, with little or no historical responsibility for climate change, should bear the cost of change as well as possible loss of economic development.
- As a result, despite pledges to the contrary, there is not much optimism that environmental targets that have been set are likely to be met.
- You emphasised the challenges in your speech in Glasgow on 16 May 2022 to mark six months since COP26:

"...frankly we need to pick up the pace. Leaders have not done enough to deliver on their Glasgow commitments. And that must change."

2.3. Media coverage including extent, focus and tone

- Discussions of detailed policies specific to pledges on adaptation, loss and damage and financing, do not often feature in mainstream media outlets. Most coverage of the issues has dropped since COP26. The picture is supported by CAL's analysis of millions of tweets on social media.
- Well-funded international outlets, NGOs and publications that focus specifically on the environment are again more likely to carry comment and report on climate change issues than national or local media outlets.

3. Sprout Social

CAL has also analysed a total of 17.6 million tweets with 62.6 million engagements globally in four time periods:

- 12 months prior to COP26 – 16 November 2020 to 30 October 2021
- COP26 – 31 October to 15 November 2021 inclusive
- Since COP26 – 16 November 2021 to 15 May 2022 inclusive
- Throughout the whole period

CAL has analysed these tweets under 20 themes, each with certain keywords.

A table summarising CAL's analysis, 20 themes, selected keywords and their ranking in volumes is shown in Appendix Two. It shows a lot of consistency in general.

During COP26

- Air pollution fell from 1-2nd to 7th place
- Fossil fuels rose from 7-8th to 4th place
- Health fell from 6-8th to 17th
- Net zero rose from 14-16th to 10th

Post COP26 – ‘climate’ fell and problems rose in terms of activity and awareness

- Climate activists fell from 3-4th to 10th in prominence
- Climate change fell from 2-3rd to 5th
- Climate emergency fell from 5-7th to 11th
- Adaptation rose from 12-13th to 9th
- Air pollution has topped Paris Agreement as the biggest issue
- Building forward (a.k.a. solutions) fell from 10-11th (or 8th) to 13th
- Cities rose from 9th to 6th
- Extreme weather rose from 10-11th (or 16th) to 8th
- Health rose from 6-8th (or 17th) to 3rd
- Mitigation rose from 14-15th to 12th

This quantitative analysis confirms a picture that CAL has described consistently: climate change activists, businesses, politicians and the media were much in evidence and there was plenty of talk in generalisations about ‘climate emergency’, ‘fossil fuels’ and ‘2050’ during COP26; but before and after COP26, the day to day problems of climate change and air pollution (so-called ‘One Air’) return to haunt us e.g. adaptation, air pollution, cities, extreme weather, finance, health, justice, mitigation, individual pollutants and the need for solutions that include technology and lifestyle changes (which range from bans, charges and campaigns to build public understanding to incentives and adoption). Campaigns to ‘ban diesel’ in London have shown how the political costs of inaction can be made greater than those of action i.e. implementing ‘lifestyle changes’. We must tackle the practical issues if climate change is to be fought. Combustion and diet are key common challenges.

CAL’s analysis supports your conclusion that urgent action is needed to ‘pick up the pace’ on NDCs and Net Zero commitments, adaptation, loss and damage, financing and delivery. In essence, occasional “good news stories” and “greenwashing” by many governments, politicians, legacy industries and others about climate change keeps getting “confused by the facts”.

The world must face up to the climate emergency as part of the largest environmental, social and financial Ponzi Scheme in human history and grasp the opportunities of a clean, healthy and sustainable environment while it opposes Russian aggression in Ukraine.

CAL would be pleased to discuss its COP26 half-term report, analysis and conclusions with you.

Yours sincerely

Simon Birkett
Founder and Director
Clean Air in London

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cc:

COP27 President Designate
Patricia Espinosa Cantellano, Executive Secretary of UN Climate Change
Select committee chairs

Appendix One

Territorial emissions in 2020

Rank	Country	Territorial (MtCO ₂)
1	China	10,668
2	United States of America	4,713
3	India	2,442
4	Russian Federation	1,577
5	Japan	1,031
6	Iran*	745
7	Germany	644
8	Saudi Arabia	626
9	South Korea	598
10	Indonesia	590
11	Canada	536
12	Brazil	467
13	South Africa	452
14	Turkey	393
15	Australia	392
16	Mexico	357
17	United Kingdom	330
18	Italy	304
19	Poland*	300
20	Kazakhstan*	291
21	France	277
31	Argentina	157
39	Bangladesh*	93
164	Barbados*	1

*Not G20 countries

Source: Global Carbon Atlas <http://www.globalcarbonatlas.org/en/CO2-emissions>

Appendix Two

Relative rankings of tweets in 20 themes

Analysis of 17.6 million tweets and 62.6 million engagements globally
between 16 November 2020 and 15 May 2022

Themes	Example keywords and hashtags	Specific examples	Ranking by volume: 16 November 2020 to 15 May 2022			
			Pre COP26	COP26	Post COP26	Total
Paris Agreement	COP26, COP27, Paris Agreement, #ParisAgreement	Primary input includes @AlokSharma_RDG, @ClimateEnvoy, @COP26, #COP26, #COP27, @PEspinosaC, @UNFCCC	1	1	2	1
Air pollution	air quality, air pollution, clean air	Primary input includes @DrMariaNeira	2	7	1	2
Climate change	#climate, climate change	General public concern about climate change e.g. protests	3	2	5	3
Climate activists	@BlackPink, climate action, #climatestrike, #FridaysForFuture, @GretaThunberg, #schoolstrike4climate	Greta Thunberg, Black Pink (in South Korea) or equivalents and their hashtags	4	3	10	4
Pollutants e.g. GHG and PM2.5	carbon dioxide, emissions, greenhouse gases, methane, NO2, ozone, PM2.5	Key polluter whether by consumption or production	5	6	4	5
Climate emergency	climate crisis, climate emergency, survival, threat	Declarations of Climate Emergency or general sense or public alarm	7	5	11	6
Fossil fuels	coal, combustion, diesel, fossil fuel, fracking, gas, oil, pipeline, shale, wood	New coal fired power stations, oil dependency or removal of subsidies. Excludes 'greenhouse'	8	4	7	7
Health	asthma, death, health, heart, lung, stroke, @WHO	Concern about health, heatwaves or vector-borne diseases	6	17	3	8
Cities	cities, @e40cities, delhi, london, mayor, migration, new york, urbanisation	Cities taking a lead on climate. Urbanisation or migration. Excludes 'Glasgow' and 'Paris'	9	9	6	9
'Building forward' (aka Build Back Better)	electric, clean energy, green economy, #greenrecovery, innovation, solar, technology, transition	Green economy successes, renewables or technology	11	8	13	10
Extreme weather and disasters	aqi, disaster, dust, episode, flood, glacier, heatwave, smog, storm, wildfire	Bushfires, droughts, floods, smog episodes, storms, Uttarakhand Chamoli glacier and wildfires	10	16	8	11
Adaptation and resilience	adapt, adaptation, coastal, desertification, protect, resilience, sea level, SIDS	Desertification in Middle East, new city of Neom in Saudi Arabia, sea level rise affecting Small Island Developing States or US defence assets	13	12	9	12
Sectors excluding 'Building forward'	chemicals, construction, food, heating, iron, meat, steel, transport, waste	Catch all for major emitting or legacy sectors that are seen as laggards e.g. chemicals, food, infrastructure, livestock industry, meat, transport or waste	12	11	14	13
Mitigation	coal-fired, deforestation, mitigate, mitigation, reduce	Politically challenging sources to mitigate e.g. deforestation in Brazil or coal use in Poland	15	15	12	14
Net zero	#carbonneutral, #netzero, neutral, #racetozero, zero	Commitments to achieve net zero by a given date in law. Excludes 'waste'	14	10	16	15
Finance	bank, #economy, finance, investor, money	Mobilisation of £100bn of climate finance annually by 2020 from developed countries	16	14	15	16
Justice	civil society, equality, gender, human right, inclusion, justice, racial, #thetimsnow, vulnerable	Legal cases e.g. Ella Roberta Adoo Kissi-Debrah, Jakarta lawsuit	17	13	17	17
Biodiversity and nature	biodiversity, nature, #peacewithnature, terra carta	Countries known for biodiversity or losing it e.g. Costa Rica and Madagascar respectively	19	18	19	18
Global warming	global warming, temperature	Concern about temperature rise	18	19	18	19
Fake news or denial	denial, deny, fake, fraud, scam	Climate change denial	20	20	20	20

Note: 'Post COP26' started on 16 November 2021 to allow for media headlines on Sunday 14 and Monday 15 November 2021