



Stop Climate Chaos Scotland Briefing for Backbench debate on "COP26 and limiting temperatures to 1.5 degrees"

Summary

This briefing has been prepared for MPs in advance of the [debate](#), on 21st October, on "COP26 and limiting temperatures to 1.5 degrees".

The national and international policy context, in relation to climate change, is described, especially the nature of the current crisis and the decisions to be taken at, and around the forthcoming COP26 in Glasgow. It seeks to describe those areas where more action by the UK Government is needed, and thus the issues that might be raised with Ministers.

Introduction

[Stop Climate Chaos Scotland](#) ("SCCS") is a diverse coalition of over 60 civil society organisations in Scotland who campaign together on climate change. Our members include environment, faith and belief groups, international development organisations, trade and student unions and community groups. We believe that the UK and Scottish Governments should take bold action to tackle climate change, with both delivering our fair share of action in response to the Paris Agreement and supporting climate justice around the world.

The debate on 21st October is an important opportunity to highlight, ahead of COP26 in Glasgow, the issues that need to be addressed. These include both the outcomes of COP26, and the actions needed by both the UK and Scottish Governments to meet their respective net-zero commitments and to provide leadership to the international community, including in relation to supporting communities already impacted by a crisis caused by the emissions of developed countries.

To assist you prepare for this debate, this briefing seeks to describe the policy context as well as potential issues to raise with Ministers. As a coalition of organisations working in Scotland, this briefing is focused on issues affecting Scotland via reserved matters, including the UK's role as joint COP26 President. SCCS also recommends you read any briefings on other matters from UK-level alliances, such as The Climate Coalition, Bond, and CAN-UK.

National and international context

The primary context is, of course, the ongoing climate crisis. The planet is already over 1°C warmer and, without action, on track for a devastating 3°C or more by the end of this century - there is no more time to waste. Climate change is affecting the world's poorest people now and fuelling a linked nature crisis.

In August 2021, hundreds of [scientists from the IPCC issued the starkest warning yet](#) about human impact on the planet amid unprecedented changes, including more intense heatwaves and more extreme weather events, with some changes now



inevitable and irreversible. The UN Secretary General branded the findings a “[code red for humanity](#)”. The science is now overwhelming: our planet is on fire and without concerted action we’re headed towards climate catastrophe; with the poorest communities – wherever they live – and future generations suffering the most. It is, however, not too late to limit global temperature rise to the critical 1.5°C threshold, as agreed at Paris, but the decisions we take over the next few years are crucial. For Scotland and the UK as a whole, **the key decisions will be the steps that the UK and Scottish Governments take in the run-up to and following COP26 in Glasgow.** To inform these, SCCS has published a briefing on “[Delivering climate justice at COP26 in Glasgow](#)”, which sets out the steps we believe need to be taken by the UK and Scottish Governments to seize the unique opportunity to shape global action created by the hosting of the talks in Glasgow. A summary is available [here](#). This briefing suggests that, in relation to mitigating the UK’s emissions:

“The UK Government must significantly raise ambition for COP26 by putting in place the range of policies and investments needed to meet its Paris Agreement obligations and limit global temperature rises to 1.5°C as fast as possible, without the use of international offsets and with an emphasis on emission reduction at source. It must also use every diplomatic tool, including its joint Presidency of COP26, to close the global gap between countries’ existing NDCs and long-term strategies (LTSs), and what is needed to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5°C, with every country taking on their fair share.”

In relation to increasing support for communities impacted by the climate crisis:: -

- “The UK Government must show global leadership for an urgent and significant scale up of grant-based finance to support poor and vulnerable countries and communities to adapt, informed by a Fair Shares analysis.
- The Government must honour its legally binding commitment to 0.7% of Gross Domestic Income for Overseas Development Assistance (ODA), ensure that international climate finance is additional to non-climate ODA, and maintain its commitment to 50% of UK climate finance for adaptation.
- It must ensure robust implementation of the policy to end UK public support for fossil fuels overseas. It must then champion a new post-2025 global adaptation finance goal which is responsive to the needs and rights of women, indigenous peoples, and other marginalised groups.
- The UK must also facilitate concrete advances on loss and damage finance at COP26; for example, by championing the creation of a global solidarity fund to support impacted communities, and investigating the feasibility of a climate damages tax on fossil fuel companies to generate revenue for such a fund, as called for by the [Make Polluters Pay](#) campaign.
- It should prevent big polluting companies, such as oil and gas majors, from influencing the talks.”

"COP26 and limiting temperatures to 1.5 degrees"

In 2019, UK emissions were 45% below 1990 levels, driven by cuts from electricity generation, waste and the industrial sector. However, the Committee on Climate Change says the UK is not on track for future emission targets. It says [progress is generally off-track in most sectors](#), and that [“the UK is leading in diagnosis but](#)



[lagging in policy and action](#)'. For credibility as COP26 President, the UK Government must get on-track to deliver and exceed the UK's strengthened NDC which [commits to cut emissions by 68% by 2030 based on 1990 levels](#).

In these circumstances, the UK needs an ambitious and detailed UK long-term strategy to meet these targets, without the use of international offsets and with an emphasis on emission reduction at source. This is critical both to meet targets at home, but also to rally all countries to raise ambition in line with limiting climate change to 1.5°C. This should:

- Require UK financial institutions to implement 1.5°C-aligned transition plans and create a rule for overall UK Government recovery spending to support the Paris Agreement.
- Introduce a zero-emissions vehicle mandate on manufacturers to deliver the 2030 phase-out of new petrol and diesel cars and vans; and halt new airport expansion; and introduce a frequent flier levy.
- Introduce an immediate end to new licensing for oil and gas production and exploration, and a managed phase-out of existing production, in line with 1.5°C. In particular, it is clear that approving a proposed new oil field, such as Cambo, would contradict the findings of the International Energy Agency which has said that to meet global net zero by 2050, there can be “no new oil and gas fields approved for development”.
- Redirect support from oil and gas to green energy and ensure a just transition led by workers, trade unions and affected communities. Prioritise investment in skills, training, and infrastructure to support a just transition for impacted workers and communities and invest £100bn within this Parliament in green projects to create 1.8 million new green jobs and to stimulate the green transition. Increase obligations on green industry, such as renewables, to grow supply chains and guarantee more UK jobs, and on the oil and gas industry for decommissioning jobs.

Alongside rapidly reducing domestic emissions, to deliver climate justice the UK must lead by example to leverage an urgent and significant global scale up of climate finance. The UK Government should therefore reverse its decision to no longer fulfil its previous commitment to 0.7% of GDI for ODA, ensure climate finance is additional to ODA, and maintain the commitment to dedicating 50% of UK climate finance to adaptation.

It should support the UN Secretary General's call for all contributing countries and multilateral development banks to do the same before COP26. UK diplomacy must ensure all countries deliver on the \$100bn pledge this year and given historic international neglect for adaptation, it should also support a specific new global public finance goal for the period after 2025. This must include the UK championing action to strengthen the decision-making power of, and direct implementation by, affected people and communities through improved access to high-quality adaptation finance. Given the importance of water to all life, and the impact of climate change on water quality and abundance, the UK Government has shown support for the concept of a [Fair Water Footprint](#). The government should continue [the support expressed by Minister Zac Goldsmith](#) by using COP26 to promote and win further support for the [Declaration and Action Plan for Fair Water Footprints](#).



These international issues were explored in the [Glasgow Climate Dialogues](#), co-hosted by SCCS and the Scottish Government. The [final communiqué](#) summarised the outputs of the four Dialogues, which were specifically designed to amplify the priorities of experts from the global South, covering: Access, Participation and Voice; Adaptation and Resilience; Loss and Damage; and Just Transition. The communiqué contains important messages for all those negotiating at COP26. The UK and Scottish Governments should heed these messages and seek to ensure they are heard, and acted upon, by all COP26 participants.

Conclusion: Making COP26 in Glasgow a turning point for climate justice

“We are approaching either a tipping point – an abrupt and irreversible change in the global climate system of unforeseeable consequences or a turning point – a moment in which changes in policy and practice around the world lead to effective climate action so as to limit the rise in global temperature to 1.5°C”.

Patricia Espinosa, UN Climate Change Executive Secretary, at [Green Climate Fund Leadership Dialogue 2020](#).

COP26 will be one of the most important climate summits ever held. The year-long delay caused by COVID-19 makes the outcome even more important. While the shadow of the pandemic still hangs over the build-up and will impact upon the participation of delegates and activists from the Global South, it also shows the deep consequences of failing to act before disasters strike. Yet the climate crisis was already with us long before the virus hit, and it has not gone away because of it. Far from it.

Ongoing climate-induced disasters across the world and the nature crisis [reinforce the need for a response that matches declarations](#) of a “climate emergency”. COP26 must re-energise the ambition of the Paris Agreement and get the world on track to limit warming to a maximum of 1.5C. It must also deliver genuine climate justice for those already impacted by a crisis they did not cause.

It is essential that both the UK and Scottish Governments act quickly to bolster their respective records of climate action, work together to seize this unique opportunity to shape global climate action, and prioritise the issues that matter most to impacted communities. **Now, more than ever, the world is in search of a turning point for climate justice, and the UN talks in Glasgow must provide it.**