



British
High Commission
Kuala Lumpur

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Taking International Action on Climate Change

The decisions made at the UN climate change conference, to be held in December 2009 in Copenhagen, will affect everybody in Britain, and all people around the world for generations to come. This document has been published so that everyone in the UK can see how we will be arguing in the negotiations, and to help the debate so their own voices can be heard.

The challenge facing negotiators at Copenhagen is global in scale. The science is clear that we need to limit global temperature increases to no more than 2 degrees Celsius (°C) compared to pre-industrial levels to have a good chance of reducing the risks of dangerous climate change in the future. But the consequences are not only environmental. The costs of inaction are economic and financial. If we fail to act, the impacts on our way of life become much greater, and the costs ever higher.

Part one sets out why we need a deal in Copenhagen. If climate change continues unchecked, our prosperity, our environment and our security will be put at risk. The UK faces a

higher risk of flooding, severe impacts on our agriculture and more extremely hot summers, putting our health services and transport networks under pressure and weakening our economy.

Without urgent action, when a child born today reaches 50, the world could have warmed by up to 2.5°C above pre-industrial levels. It will be a world that will be experiencing dramatic change

- Summer temperatures like those experienced in Europe in 2003 – a summer with a record breaking heat-wave in which 35 000 people died will be exceeded regularly. Some 20-30% of plant and animal species could be extinct
- Food production may be starting to decline – whilst the world's population is set to increase to 9 billion by 2050.
- Such changes could lead to increasing millions of displaced people
- 60% reduction in glaciers in the northern hemisphere, potentially affecting the drinking water supply of a sixth of the world's population
- Severe impacts on many of our most important ecosystems



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In developing countries climate change threatens human and ecological catastrophe, with food and water shortages, more widespread disease and an increasing number of climate refugees. The resulting political instability could have major consequences for our own national security. Climate change poses systematic risk to our economy.

But tackling climate change is also about seizing opportunities. The UK stands to benefit from the enormous potential for innovation in new low carbon technologies and green industries, already worth an estimated £3 trillion worldwide and employing 880 000 people in the UK. Developing new low carbon energy sources will reduce our long-term dependency on fossil fuels, making our economy less susceptible to volatile oil prices and ensuring our future energy supplies are more secure. Low carbon investment is crucial to our economic recovery.

Only an international agreement can take on the challenge of tackling climate change. No one country on its own can do it: this is a global problem which requires a global solution. All countries must be confident that they do not act alone, and the poorest countries need support from others. Building on and learning the lessons from previous agreements, we must put in place a comprehensive framework for action by all countries that which ensures that commitments are delivered.

This is urgent. The longer we delay, the more severe the consequences of climate change become, and the higher the costs of the subsequent actions we will be forced to take. International political momentum has been building towards Copenhagen for two years: the moment has now to be seized.

Part two sets out the kind of agreement we want, describing the UK's principal priorities in each of the main fields of the negotiations.

The UK is working for a deal that is **ambitious, effective** and **fair**.

Ambitious: The UK believes that the over-riding goal of the Copenhagen agreement is to limit climate change to an increase in global average temperature of 2°C. This means the deal needs to establish a credible trajectory for reducing global emissions by at least 50% on 1990



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levels by 2050 and to put in place the measures now to ensure that emissions start to fall within the next decade.

Developed countries need to lead the way, setting new binding targets to reduce their emissions by at least 80% by 2050, including stretching mid-term targets on a pathway to getting there. Based on the IPCC's analysis, developed countries should collectively reduce their emissions by 25-40% below 1990 levels by 2020.

The level of effort and commitment from **developing countries** will need to reflect their national circumstances, but they, too, will need to take action, with appropriate support from developed countries, to put themselves on a low carbon development pathway. Recent research suggests that by 2020, emissions in developing countries as a group need to be roughly 15% to 30% lower than projected "business as usual" levels.

An ambitious agreement must also ensure that all major sources of emissions are included, including those from aviation and shipping and from deforestation.

Tackling deforestation is vital: emissions from deforestation account for a little under a fifth of the global total, while forests also have huge biodiversity and environmental value. The international community has a clear interest in preserving the world's forests, but they are the property of the countries in which they stand. Taking account of the rights of the local communities and indigenous peoples who live in them, at Copenhagen we want to reach agreement to reduce tropical deforestation by at least 50% by 2020, and to halt global forest cover loss by 2030 at the latest. We want to agree to substantial early financing until longer term finance (eg from the carbon market) comes on line.

Effective: The Copenhagen agreement needs to put in place a framework which provides certainty for, and therefore drives investment in, clean energy, sustainable forestry and land use and adaptation.

The UK supports in particular the development of a **global carbon market** to encourage emissions reductions in a cost-effective way, and to provide large flows of finance to developing countries. We want to agree an international framework that supports the linking of emissions



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trading systems between developed countries by 2015; that establishes new sectoral carbon trading systems to allow the more economically advanced developing countries to access finance and cost effective emissions reduction in key sectors; and which reforms the existing Clean Development Mechanism (which supports developed country investment in developing countries and the generation of carbon credits) to improve its efficiency and environmental effectiveness.

Developing and deploying **technology** is essential to tackle the causes and consequences of climate change – from low carbon sources of energy to building infrastructure that can withstand the effects of climate change. At Copenhagen we will aim to ensure that existing technologies are rolled out more rapidly around the world partly by building the carbon market, and partly through providing additional policy support and technical assistance to developing countries. We will also accelerate the development of new technologies so that they can be deployed commercially as rapidly and cheaply as possible, through increased investment in innovation and enhanced collaboration with developing countries.

To be effective, the agreement must be legally binding on all parties, with an effective compliance regime, and ensure that every country's emissions reduction commitments are transparent and are being implemented. So the UK is calling for robust **monitoring, reporting and verification** (MRV) arrangements.

Fair: Climate change involves a fundamental injustice: it has been largely caused by the industrialised countries' historic emissions, but it is the poorest and most vulnerable people who will suffer its worst and earliest effects. It is very important therefore that the Copenhagen agreement provides support to developing countries for both coping with and acting on climate change. We will aim to ensure that the poorest and most vulnerable countries get the financial support they need to make adaptation to climate change an integral part of their national development planning processes, with money targeted where it is needed most. We will also seek to secure international support for better sources of climate information to assess the future risks of climate change and knowledge about how to adapt.



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So a high priority for Copenhagen will be to put in place the **finance** needed to support action by developing countries on both mitigation and adaptation. Much of the funding for reducing emissions - and some for adaptation - is likely to come from the private sector, and it will be essential to for the global deal to put in place measures that encourage this investment. But a significant amount of public funding will be required - particularly in the short term to ensure action happens fast enough and emissions peak in the next decade, and to help countries adapt.

At Copenhagen we will aim to ensure developed countries pledge to meet their Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitments and to 'climate proof' this spending. In addition we will also aim to ensure that a proportion of climate finance is provided on top of existing long-term ODA commitments. We would like to see future climate finance provided both by developed and developing countries (except the poorest), with contributions calculated according to emissions and countries' ability to pay. We will aim to agree systems for generating predictable revenues for action on climate change, so that developing countries have the confidence to take ambitious action knowing that the money will be there.

To make an ambitious new agreement work, we need robust **international institutions** that are capable of implementing a deal quickly and at sufficient scale. Wherever possible, we want to reform and build on existing institutions, only establishing new ones where necessary. At Copenhagen we will aim to agree simple, fair and efficient governance structures for finance, with equal representation of contributors and recipients in a high-level coordinating body under the guidance of the UNFCCC. We want to see climate finance directly supporting national low carbon and climate resilient development strategies, consistent with internationally agreed standards of financial management. This will enable decisions about spending to be made by developing countries themselves.

Part three sets out what the UK is doing itself at home to contribute to the global climate effort. Since 1990 the UK's greenhouse gas emissions have been reduced by 20%, exceeding our target under the Kyoto Protocol.



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Under our 2008 Climate Change Act we have now become the first country in the world to set legally-binding 'carbon budgets', which will reduce UK emissions by 34% by 2020 and 80% by 2050. Later this summer the Government will publish a White Paper setting out a comprehensive strategy to meet these targets, creating the long-term conditions for businesses to invest in the low carbon economy. This will include our policies to help homes and businesses improve their energy efficiency, to increase the proportion of energy from renewable sources such as wind and biomass to 15% by 2020; to facilitate the building of new nuclear power stations to replace those due to close; and to support up to four carbon capture and storage demonstrations, making us a world leader in this vital technologies to reduce emissions from coal-fired power stations. The Government is committed to maximising the economic benefits of moving towards a low carbon economy, to safeguard the UK's energy security and to protect the most vulnerable in society.

An ambitious agreement at Copenhagen is imperative for the UK. Success – or failure - will affect everyone in this country, and generations to come. The Government is striving for ambition but it is vital too that there is public pressure for a strong deal at Copenhagen, both in the UK and across the world. We need a deal that is ambitious enough to put us on a pathway towards the 2°C goal; and which secures action on a sufficient scale to trigger the investment and action needed to move rapidly towards a low carbon economy. Everyone can help make the case for ambition at Copenhagen.

Agreement at Copenhagen is a down-payment on a more secure, more stable world. We cannot afford to let the opportunity pass.