



Non-parties submission

A submission by WWF UK based on stakeholder discussions at a UK Talanoa Dialogue event held on 19 October 2018 at WWF UK, Living Planet Centre, Woking, UK.



Submitted by WWF UK on 29 October 2019. For more information contact Shirley Matheson, Climate change specialist, WWF UK, smatheson@wwf.org.uk

As part of [Green Great Britain Week](#), WWF-UK and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) invited a range of businesses, civil society and devolved administrations to participate in a UK Talanoa Dialogue. The event took place on the 19th of October 2018 at the Living Planet Centre in Woking, UK.

WWF has put together key findings from the event below, followed by notes documenting the areas discussed.

Key findings / recommendations:

- The UK's action and vision for decarbonisation has demonstrated leadership in many sectors; and proven that growth and development can be decoupled
- Noting the level of urgency highlighted in the IPCC special report, going forward UK Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) must be ambitious and positive, appropriate to the level of ambition *needed*.
- To achieve higher levels of ambition it is vital that government efforts ensure joined up policy across sectors (including power, transport, heating/cooling buildings, and emissions from industry) to ensure a synergistic approach to climate ambition.
- NDCs must recognise the relationship between global and UK emissions and the role of trade to safeguard against exporting emissions, and/or take responsibility for emissions with a foreign point of origin (e.g. the food system).
- NDCs and UK policy must include careful consideration for land management measures; and consider the need for different approaches to the agricultural sector to ensure measures appropriate to the various UK landscapes and farming situations are put in place.
- NDCs must consider the context and the crucial trade-offs which can support or inhibit climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts – including measures to protect and restore biodiversity; action to keep global temperature rises from climate change to 1.5°C; and commitments to the sustainable development goals (SDGs). Specifically, WWF UK called on a global deal for nature and people which makes the most of critical moments in 2020 to balance.



The initial section on ‘Where are we’ consisted of a summary presentation from IPCC Special Report author Dr Raphael Slade, and introductory remarks from WWF UK and BEIS.

WWF UK issued a call for government and delegates to consider the need to better align climate change, environment, and human wellbeing noting the shared impacts and benefits, meaning the three cannot be considered in isolation. This was met with support from a number of delegates in attendance; with one noting the convergence of climate change and environmental protection as a key aspect; and another noting the importance of the SDGs as a traditional starting point for climate discussions. WWF UK also noted the **potential for the UK to take a leading role in bringing this to the forefront at the United Nations General Assembly by calling for a Global Deal for Nature to ensure an integrated approach.**

BEIS provided a summary of UK progress thus far. The UK Climate Change Act, a pioneering piece of legislation is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year and progress in the UK energy market has illustrated the possibilities of clean growth. Through the decoupling of growth and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the UK has managed to reduce its GHG emissions by 40% whilst growing its economy by more than two thirds between 1990 and 2016. Following the release of the IPCC Special Report, **the UK government has requested the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) for advice on setting a date on achieving net zero emissions in the UK.**

Additional comments from plenary discussion called for considerations for the urgency, equity and behavioural change needed to increase climate ambition. One delegate reflected on the Arctic: that fossil fuel extraction in the Arctic was originated from nothing – with the infrastructure now there born of extreme efforts with basic tools and in near impossible conditions over a century ago. Through this example, she calls on the UK to consider ambition from the benefit it will bring rather than the cost; and encourages the government to think in terms of **transformation rather than focus on incremental change** – which she argued was otherwise too limiting given the urgency for climate action.

One delegate asked the group to consider climate change as a challenge through the eyes of young people in the UK today and echoed views from around the room that the changes we need to make will affect this part of the population the most. Given the urgency set out in the IPCC Special Report, action must occur in the next decade to provide us with a chance to meeting the 1.5°C target. Additionally, there was support throughout the room on the fact that the IPCC special report acknowledged **behavioural change as a key factor for climate mitigation** for the first time.

One delegate called for a change in the way we talk about climate change in the UK: while the science coming out of the IPCC is clear on the reality of climate change; **many still use language which dilutes the certainty of the messaging**. Acknowledging the potential effects of warming, as set out in the IPCC Special Report, it was further suggested that the government must start operating towards a 1.5°C scenario regardless of the scale of the challenge ahead. **There was a call for the UK to remain ambitious and positive, and to act in a way that is appropriate to the level of ambition needed.**

Equity was raised as an important area for consideration. An ongoing challenge being enabling people with the least money to engage in climate mitigation – including those who e.g. rent their homes and drive a second-hand car.



In considering the question 'Where do we want to go', the session address three themes: devolved government, renewable energy and farming.

Devolved governments illustrated their important role in pushing forward ambition in the UK. Scotland is a global leader in tackling climate change and their low carbon transition is well underway. The delegate from the Scottish government stated that they have already reduced their emissions by 49%. The delegate highlighted that we must ensure that the transition to a modern global low carbon economy follows

Just Transition principles and delivers economic, social and well-being benefits for all.

The Scottish government has already introduced legislation to increase their targets. The Bill proposes - 90% GHG emissions reductions (covering all sectors, including a share of international aviation and shipping) by 2050, which will mean achieving net-zero CO₂ by the same date. The Scottish Government is also committed to achieving net-zero emissions for all GHG as soon as this can be done credibly and responsibly. The delegate from the Welsh government added that they have a target by 2050 to reduce their net emissions by at least 80%. This will be achieved by setting interim targets and using carbon budgets.

Other delegates expressed the **opportunity for devolved governments and municipal governments to be role models and set increased ambitions for the UK government.** A delegate mentioned that although austerity has been a municipal crisis, affecting cities and councils the most, there are local solutions to national problems.

Delegates also noted the **importance of joining up policy across government to ensure a synergistic approach to climate ambition.** They noted that stronger interlinkages across different layers of government on climate policy would make it easier to implement key mitigation strategies, e.g. Eco-design. On the other hand, inconsistency in regulation and ambition will hinder the efforts to address climate change.

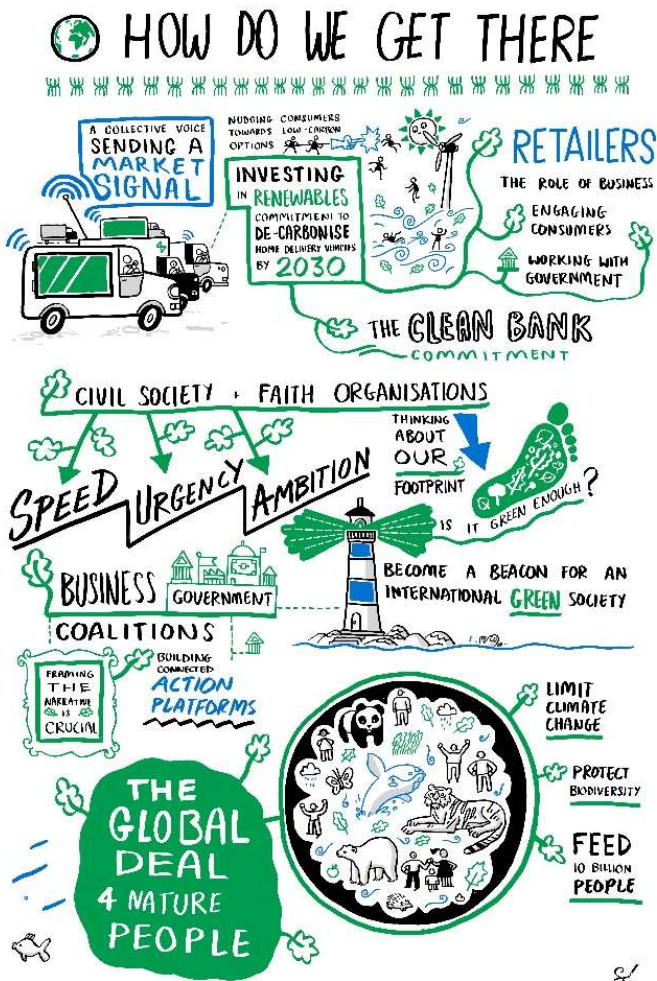
Delegates from the energy sector questioned what government's role should be in the energy market, as it has traditionally been to regulate and set the market, but technological developments are setting the market before government.

They suggest that government should do what the market cannot, which is caring for vulnerable people. Delegates suggested government **should not shy away from doing what is difficult and unpopular, like regulating house heating systems**, given the need to curb emissions in that sector. Delegates agreed that a balance between a regulatory framework and creating space for innovation is necessary.

A delegate representing British farmers called for a **different approach in the agriculture sector**. As an example of the stark differences affecting the way the sector works, they told the group about connectivity in rural Wales, citing personal experience of the challenges of accessing phone signal or internet connection – essential communications channels often taken for granted in other sectors. They urged for **careful consideration of the potential trade-offs between mitigation, biodiversity and land-use when considering climate mitigation**.

Noting the variety of UK landscapes, a delegate suggested that **a case by case approach is required to determine the most appropriate land management measures**. Additional comments from the group stated that producers, retailers and consumers must work together to mitigate the impact of our food system on climate (including behaviour). **What people do in their homes, what they eat and how retailers regulate their products is as important as how food is produced**.

Another delegate called out a weakness in our carbon accounting: currently we measure the carbon footprint of what we produce in the UK, but we do not consider the emissions from our agriculture imports. **To be a truly sustainable food system, the delegate called on the UK to consider the footprint of farmers at home and abroad**.



When discussing how we could achieve our vision of greater ambition, three themes led the discussion: the role of businesses; the role of civil society and the value of coalitions in supporting climate mitigation in the UK.

The group was joined by a major retailer which briefed the room on the commitments they had in place to reduce their climate footprint including a commitment to follow a 1.5°C trajectory. They told delegates of their strategy to influence suppliers through direct calls for action and other retailers by leading by example. Examples of activities included the decarbonising of home delivery vehicles to help build the case to decarbonise larger distribution channels.

They noted they are exploring how they can / should nudge consumers towards more sustainable shopping baskets (through, for example, enabling low carbon choices in stores), but also highlighted that **many retailers face a crucial question – to what extent is their role to meet consumer demand and to influence consumption patterns?**

The group reflected on the role of customers and individual diet choices. The link between low carbon and healthy diets was made, with the suggestion to incorporate this framing to stimulate necessary behaviour changes. Cost incentives were not felt to be relevant in the UK, as ease and social circles’ influence is more pertinent.

Where previously the government had noted its success in decoupling economic growth from carbon emission in some areas, discussions questioned whether this was the case across all business sectors. This highlighted **concern about the extent to which profit-driven approaches in sectors such as retail may still limit the capacity of business to decarbonise.**

A delegate expressed the need for “big shifts”, noting the **need for banks and investment firms to phase out their finance on fossil fuels in order to achieve meaningful change.** Also relevant is the need to separate pension funds from fossil fuel exploration and production companies.

A representative of a faith organisation noted the importance for the UK to consider global equity when addressing climate change, particularly addressing disadvantages in terms of climate mitigation and adaptation in less wealthy nations. This organisation also called for a focus on urgency, speed and ambition.

The delegate also stated that the UK, and most developed countries, are still outsourcing their carbon footprints, thereby **highlighting the risk that the reduction in UK emissions might merely correlate with an increase in emissions in developing countries.**

There was support around the room on the crucial role of coalitions in effectively dealing with climate mitigation. One delegate told of the origins of a coalition which contributed to the establishment of the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan's zero-carbon city by 2050 initiative. It was concluded that **coalitions have the opportunity to facilitate increased climate ambition by sharing best practice and lessons learned, and the importance of coordination across coalitions was highlighted.**

A few delegates noted that there is high value in big retailers and others joining coalitions because it sends a message to other retailers. It was also noted that **SMEs are often not able to participate in coalitions – a significant challenge to climate mitigation as such companies often do not have the interest or resources to implement or influence climate mitigation independently.**

The session was closed with summaries from WWF UK and BEIS highlighting notable aspects of the discussion including: the need for a global deal for nature and people, the welcomed addition of behavioural change; and the importance of the UK leadership in pushing boundaries, emulating its leading role in climate ambition as it set out the Climate Change Act a decade ago.

A representative from the Fiji High Commission closed the event by welcoming discussion that had taken place, noting the UK Talanoa Dialogue had provided an inclusive platform on which to discuss climate ambition.