



Climate Action Network UK (CAN-UK) Submission to COP26 Presidency July Ministerial

CAN-UK welcomes the open letter from COP26 President Designate dated 15th July, and reiterates his assertion that while progress on climate action has been made, we must be honest that collectively we have not yet delivered at the scale and pace that science requires.

COP26 is a critical moment for the world to come together to secure a more sustainable, just, and resilient future for us all. This is the decade when we must collectively limit climate change, restore nature, and make our societies more equal and just. Otherwise we will emerge from this global pandemic locked into a climate emergency, an ecological emergency, and a poverty emergency. We will undermine our ability - and that of future generations - to produce food, to have enough water, to remain healthy, and to thrive.

Last year COP26 was understandably postponed, but climate change has not been on hold: its consequences continue to disproportionately affect people from the poorest and most vulnerable countries and communities, compounding their hardship, and widening inequality now and for decades to come. Never has it been so important to ensure no one is left behind, and countries must live up to their international responsibilities.

COP26 will be a test of the willingness of all nations to live up to the promises they made to all people of the world in the Paris Agreement – especially to those most vulnerable and to future generations. Promises to take the following action on the climate crisis:

- Mitigation – to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C.
- Adaptation – to enable communities to adapt to climate change, particularly through financial support to those who need it most.
- Loss and damage – to address the social, cultural, and economic losses and damage caused by impacts now and in the future, including irreversible losses from climate change.

More than five years on from Paris, there has been progress, but there is still a long way to go to fully implement the Paris Agreement. COP26 must ensure the Paris Agreement is made real.

This is all the more challenging in the context of Covid-19, but it is entirely consistent with building back better. We must use the recovery process to break with that which has made our societies vulnerable and caused this harm, and instead invest in a transition to the sustainable, just, and resilient societies we deserve.

High ambition, stronger short-term action, equitable participation, and climate justice must be put at the heart of COP26, and all nations must come with renewed ambition to limit climate change, restore nature, and make our societies more equal and just through domestic action and global cooperation.

We are living in unprecedented times – both in terms of the pandemic and the climate emergency. Our interconnectivity and fragility has never been so clear. Around the world, solidarity with each other and particularly the most vulnerable has grown, as have calls for societies to build back better from this crisis and to work together to prevent the next.

People want change, and they want climate change stopped. The past few years have seen rising public concern – most visibly from young people, but also from across society – including doctors, firefighters, the military, faith leaders and investors. The public thirst for action is palpable, in the UK and across the world. Failure at COP26 is not an option.

Protecting people and nature from the impacts of climate change

The July Ministerial must begin a constructive process to concretely advance action on loss and damage. This must include scaling up finance to address loss and damage, and acknowledging it as the third pillar of climate action on a par with mitigation and adaptation. All essential ingredients for COP26 to be judged a success.

Loss and damage refers to the impacts of climate change on people and nature, where adaptation has not occurred or is not sufficient to withstand the impacts. Loss and damage has been recognised in the UNFCCC negotiations since the early 1990s and is enshrined in Article 8 of the Paris Agreement as an area of climate action alongside mitigation and adaptation. Despite the devastating loss and damage being suffered around the world, virtually no progress has been made on this vital area of climate action. That needs to change at COP26.

Climate change is costly, deadly and hits hardest those who are least responsible for causing it. The Climate Vulnerable Forum estimates that developing countries could face financial losses of US\$4 trillion per year by 2030. Low-income countries are exposed to some of the most severe climate impacts. They have the least capacity to adapt, and find it hardest to recover from the loss and damage caused by devastating floods, droughts, heatwaves, cyclones, and rising sea levels.

More and more people are facing significant and frequent impacts of climate change, which are reversing development gains. These are having the biggest impacts on the poorest and the most vulnerable people in developing countries. The human costs of climate change include increased hunger and poverty, reduced access to water, and climate-induced migration and displacement creating vulnerability to trafficking and modern slavery. With limited available options, those people and countries least responsible for the climate emergency are forced into even greater indebtedness to address the losses and damage suffered, thus exacerbating the cycle of poverty.

We call on all countries to:

- Use this ministerial discussion to start a process to advance the loss and damage negotiations, and achieve a negotiated outcome that includes loss and damage as a standing item on the COP/CMA agenda.
- Work together to ensure the COP25 decision to operationalise the Santiago Network on loss and damage is fulfilled by COP26, including securing the resources to provide the mandated technical assistance.
- Agree to put establishing new and additional sources of finance for loss and damage on the agenda for COP26, and explore how a range of options could be advanced – including debt cancellation, shifting subsidies, and a climate damages tax.
- Recognise that over-reliance on insurance is not the solution, and provide a package of support that includes social protection and other grant-based finance to ensure those most at risk are not bearing alone the financial burden of the most severe consequences of climate change.

Cutting emissions to keep 1.5°C within reach

All countries must work together to close the gap between existing nationally determined contributions (NDC) and long-term strategies (LTS), and what is needed to keep the goal of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C within reach, with every country taking on their fair share. In addition, economic recovery

packages need to drive rapid and deep decarbonisation of economies in the near-term, enabling more ambitious 2030 NDC targets.

The world has already experienced more than 1°C of warming, and current NDCs put us on course to a devastating 3°C or more. COP26 must be the COP that delivers on the Paris Agreement: it must deliver enhanced NDCs and long-term strategies that are consistent with pursuing efforts to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C, in line with equity and justice. According to the IPCC, this means global emissions need to halve between now and 2030. The IPCC has highlighted that a 1.5°C world is much less dangerous than a 2°C world for people and nature, since hundreds of millions fewer people would be faced with climate-related poverty and water stress, and 10 million fewer people affected by sea-level rise by 2100.

Nature is declining rapidly; if we are to limit global warming to 1.5°C we must urgently halt and reverse its loss. The conclusions of the recent IPCC/IPBES Working Group reportⁱ underline that the nature and climate crises must be tackled together if we are to solve either. Further recent scienceⁱⁱ highlights that even if fossil fuel emissions were eliminated immediately, land-use emissions from the global food system alone, including from ecosystem degradation and deforestation, would make it impossible to limit warming to 1.5°C and difficult even to realise the 2°C target. Protecting remaining primary and intact ecosystems, restoring degraded terrestrial and marine ecosystems, and mainstreaming sustainable land management practices, are the most important and urgent priorities for international climate change and biodiversity cooperation. Biodiversity loss, from destroyed or degraded ecosystems including forests, drylands, grasslands, coastal (e.g. mangroves), marine (e.g. seagrass) and wetland (e.g. wetlands and peatlands) ecosystems, contributes to climate change through the release of greenhouse gases and to poverty through the collapse of livelihoods. In contrast, a healthy, fully functioning natural environment can limit and even reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and provide the resources people need to survive and thrive.

We call on all countries to:

- Increase the ambition presented in enhanced NDCs and LTSs in advance of COP26, with countries taking their fair share of global action – particularly major emitters.
- Secure an agreement at COP26 for all Parties to dramatically accelerate action to close the remaining gap to 1.5°C.
- Ensure economic recovery actions establish the investment and direction to deliver and exceed national NDCs, through a rapid and just transition from all fossil fuels, benefiting all parts of the community and protecting nature.
- Participate in international dialogue to ensure economic recovery and stimulus efforts result in fair and resilient delivery of enhanced NDCs and LTSs; a global, just transition away from fossil fuel dependency; and an expansion and restoration of natural sinks – with co-benefits for sustainable development, and vulnerable and marginalised people.
- Include ambitious and rigorous ecosystem protection, restoration, and sustainable management into the enhanced NDCs, LTSs, and national adaptation plans. Any ecosystem-related targets or commitments in NDCs, LTSs, and adaptation plans should prioritise biodiversity enhancement, and respect human rights. Accounting for carbon benefits should have concrete, evidence-based assessments, and be compatible with science and the goals of the Paris Agreement.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Support market shifts to achieve deforestation-free supply chains and deliver a package of actions and solutions at COP26, including via the Forest, Agriculture and Commodity Trade (FACT) dialogue.
- Maximise synergies across climate, nature, trade, and development in 2021 through the UNFCCC, CBD, SDGs Global Ocean Treaty, UN Food Systems Summit, WTO Ministerial Summit, and UNCCD. This should include reflecting robustly in the COP26 decision text the role of ecosystems in climate

change mitigation and adaptation, and delivering joint work programmes on climate change and biodiversity in the UNFCCC and the CBD.

- Work together with multilateral development banks, funding mechanisms under the UNFCCC, and the private sector to nature-proof finance and increase finance for high-quality nature-based solutions, and with multilateral and bilateral trade partners to ensure trade rules support biodiversity goals.
- Establish clear standards and safeguards for nature-based solutions projects to provide the following guarantees. They are nature positive. They uphold the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, are informed by them, and where appropriate are delivered by them. They address systemic barriers to delivery. And they are compatible with science and the goals of the Paris Agreement and the CBD.

Mobilising finance

Globally, climate finance must be urgently and significantly scaled up, and access improved for poor and vulnerable countries and communities on the frontline of the climate crisis. This must include providing 50% of climate finance for adaptation, working towards a new global adaptation finance goal, scale up locally-led adaptation that strengthens the decision-making power of affected people, and ensure support is accessible and responsive to the needs and rights of women, children, Indigenous Peoples, people with disabilities, and other marginalised groups.

It must be a priority for all Parties to make good on the annual US\$100bn pledge this year, crucially by scaling up adaptation funding for the most climate-vulnerable countries. Finance to support developing countries to adapt has been stagnating at around 20% of overall climate finance for many years, falling short of the Paris Agreement commitment to provide a balance between adaptation and mitigation finance. Moreover, the vast majority of this finance is being provided in the form of loans, with grant-based support comprising just 20% of adaptation finance. In addition, much more action is needed to ensure finance reaches the people who need it most. This must include addressing the neglect of gender equality to ensure significantly more climate finance reaches women, who are on the frontline of the climate crisis.

We call on all countries to:

- Support the UN Secretary General's call for all contributing countries and multilateral development banks to commit to allocating at least half of their public climate finance to adaptation, and build a coalition of countries and partners in advance of COP26 committed to this aim as well as increased grant-based finance and improved access to and quality of adaptation finance.
- Reach an agreement at COP26 for a new, post-2025 global public finance goal specifically for adaptation – given that the US\$100bn goal has failed to address the ongoing neglect of adaptation.
- Scale up gender equality efforts in climate finance spending, in a way that recognises the importance of women's leadership in delivering adaptation and ensures human rights are protected in implementation.
- Commit to the principles for locally led adaptation action, and scale up adaptation that strengthens the decision-making power of, and direct implementation by, affected people and communities – particularly marginalised groups (women, children, people with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, etc.), and that strengthens local structures, processes, and institutions according to their needs and priorities.
- Provide at least 0.7% of GNI for aid and ensure international climate finance is additional to and does not compromise non-climate ODA.

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About CAN-UK:

CAN-UK is a coalition of more than 40 UK-based environment and international development NGOs working together on international policy issues at the nexus of climate-poverty-nature. CAN-UK is the UK node of CAN International - a global network of more than 1,500 civil society organisations in over 130 countries driving collective and sustainable action to fight the climate crisis and to achieve social and racial justice.

ⁱ https://ipbes.net/sites/default/files/2021-06/20210609_workshop_report_embargo_3pm_CEST_10_june_0.pdf

ⁱⁱ <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/370/6517/705>

ⁱⁱⁱ Greenpeace byline: Existing loopholes in the accounting methodology for Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) and other nature restoration commitments in NDCs must be closed. In addition, Greenpeace calls for AFOLU and nature restoration targets to be accounted for entirely separately from fossil fuel emissions. This specific ask is the subject of ongoing discussions among the signatories of the Glasgow Action Plan, with the aim of forming a more substantiated position by COP26.