

TOPIC ONE – Improvements to nationally determined contributions (NDC)

The United Kingdom is in a unique position because of Brexit. However, departure from the European Union is unlikely to affect the UK's commitment to greenhouse gas emissions. Decision will need to be made whether UK will commit to the Paris Agreement jointly with the EU or as an individual party. If acting as its own party it will need to submit its own NDC's. This in turn will provide the opportunity for the UK to take the lead in setting targets for NDC that will make a real difference to climate change mitigation. The UK's current long-term target is a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of at least 80% by the year 2050 (Climate Change Act (2008)). This target has formed in contribution to the global emissions path aiming to keep global average temperature to around 2°C above pre-industrial levels. The Paris Agreement establishes the aim of keeping warming well below this, with an effort to limit it to 1.5°C.

The targets set by the UK are not aimed to lower emissions to that established in the Paris Agreement. The current 2050 target is ambitious and existing policies in place are not enough to ensure the carbon budgets are met. Based on the Paris Agreement 2050 target the UK would need to reach net zero emissions no later than the rest of world, which would require large scale deployment of removal technologies or net emissions to reach zero 10 years earlier than stated.

Priority should be to close the gap on these existing targets while exploring options to reach net zero emissions as opposed to further stretching the UK's emissions targets. There is a real opportunity for the UK to step up and take the lead in research and development of removal technologies (NETs). Being a country of wealth, investment into these NET's would not only improve NDC but also could be used to assist those in developing nations to offset future development until transition into more sustainable energy sources can be made.

TOPIC TWO – North-South relations

The UK has led from the front in terms of climate finance (UK International Climate Fund), allocating 50% of this to support adaptation in the world's developing countries. The ICF delivers directly to global commitments, with the government doubling funding for five years from 2015. The EU itself is committed to contributing \$100b a year by 2020 to support developing nations.

The impact on the ICF from exit from the EU is still unclear. However, the UK budget remains split equally between mitigation and adaptation and this is likely to continue with the referendum expected not to have much effect on the deliverance of adaptation internationally. The Department for International Development shows this strong support for adaptation in the global development community

The UK has already paid about £400m into the global climate fund so far and remain one of the highest contributors. However, this doesn't necessarily represent contributions per capita, which the UK are aiming for approximately £15/person. Following departure from the EU, the UK should re-confirm its commitments to the global climate fund. It is essential for participation of the wealthier nations in assisting developing countries in their response to climate change. Not doing so could compromise the prospects of these developing nations meeting climate objectives.