

UK priorities for COP29 Westminster Hall briefing (Tuesday 10th September)

Summary

- The world is off track to limit global warming to 1.5°C and avoid the worst of climate catastrophe. Under current national plans, global greenhouse gas emissions will increase [9% by 2030](#), yet the science shows emissions must fall by 45% by the end of this decade to meet climate targets.
- With climate-related floods, fires and droughts around the world becoming more frequent, all eyes turn to COP29 to close the climate ambition gap.
- Last year's COP28 saw an important shift in agreement to "[transition away from fossil fuels](#)". When countries meet in Baku progress on this promise must be made.
- In June this year, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called out the fossil fuel industry for being "[the godfathers of climate chaos](#)" and urged banks and investors to stop funding fossil-fuel projects and instead develop plans to transition funding towards clean energy.

What is COP29?

- [The COP29 summit](#) will bring together global leaders and negotiators in Baku, Azerbaijan this November 11th-22nd to discuss the next stage of internationally agreed action on the climate emergency.
- The annual conference, known in full as the 29th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), will be an important moment to align international work and limit global warming, adapt to and address the impacts of climate change and mobilise crucial financing to support developing countries.
- In 2015 at COP21, the [Paris Agreement](#) was adopted, which is legally binding and commits signatories to limit global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, a pledge reinforced in more recent UN climate summits. Despite government promises, [warming projections](#) have not improved and under existing policies will lead to 2.5°C of warming by the end of the century.
- Finance is high on the agenda for this year's Summit, as governments will establish a new climate finance goal, and there is likely to be discussion of the COP28 commitment to "[transition away from fossil fuels](#)" and the 2025 deadline for setting a new country level climate action targets in the form of "Nationally Determined Contributions" (NDC).

UK priorities for COP29

1. Showcase strong UK leadership on fossil fuel phaseout

- The COP28 commitment "[to transition away from fossil fuels](#)" represented a breakthrough moment for moving past coal, oil and gas.
- We have seen a step change from the previous government's approach to "max out" North Sea fossil fuels. The Labour government has committed to [end licences for exploring new oil and gas](#) and has taken the [decision](#) to not defend the

Rosebank oil and gas field in the courts, which [Uplift](#) argues was unlawfully approved by the previous government.

- It is crucial that the government delivers on these domestic promises. If fully implemented, the UK will be the first G7 oil and gas producing nation to end new oil and gas licences, sending a powerful signal about the UK's commitment to transition away from fossil fuels.
- Along with other rich nations, the UK government must show leadership in its international engagement at COP29. Engaging with members of the [Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance](#) at the Summit would strengthen joint working on this agenda. Additionally, the UK must include commitments to phase out fossil fuel production in its updated NDC.

2. Set an ambitious New Collective Quantified Goal and meet existing climate finance commitments

- At COP29 the UK will set its [New Collective Quantified Goal](#) (NCQG).
- The scale of climate finance required globally for developing countries falls within the trillions and therefore it is essential the UK recognises and champions this if the 1.5C goal is to be met.
- The NCQG must be set up to meet needs for mitigation, adaptation and the losses and damages derived from climate change.
- In an address to [Chatham House](#), Simon Stiell, Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC argued a “quantum leap” is needed in climate finance in 2024 and 2025. [A report](#) from the UN Conference on Trade and Development proposes an annual target of \$500 billion as a floor starting from 2025, with a target of \$1.55 trillion by 2030.
- It is crucial that the UK also delivers on its existing climate finance commitments. In 2019, the government announced it would spend [£11.6 billion](#) on international climate finance (ICF) from 2021/22 to 2025/26 and the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero has [committed to meet this pledge](#).
- In February this year, the Independent Commission for Aid Impact found the Foreign Office has in fact reclassified [around £1.7 billion](#) of existing UK aid as ICF and that this “did not result in additional financing to developing countries”. The UK is currently [£2 billion off track](#) from meeting its ICF goals and without significantly increased climate finance, developing nations will not be able to transition to low-carbon economies or protect communities from the worsening impacts of climate hazards.

3. Ensure high-level UK government representation and appoint a Climate Envoy

- Any government that is serious about climate diplomacy will make its presence known at international fora like COP29. It is positive news that the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, Ed Miliband MP, will be [leading negotiations](#) at the Summit.
- However, it is important that the Prime Minister as well as senior cabinet ministers also attend COP29 to signal to the world that the UK is politically committed to tackling climate change.

- The government should honour the commitment it made prior to the election by restoring the role of Special Representative on Climate Change (UK Climate Envoy.) In May 2024 [over 50 cross-party MPs](#) made the case for this role to be restored. Previously, the [Climate Change Committee](#), [former climate diplomats](#) and [civil society groups](#) have also backed the position.

Suggested interventions

- Will the government include commitments to phase out oil and gas production in the UK's Nationally Determined Contribution?
- What steps is the government taking to align the UK's oil and gas sector with international climate commitments?
- What steps will the government take to ensure diplomatic success in transitioning away from fossil fuels globally?
- What steps has the government taken to ensure the UK's New Collective Quantified Goal is at the scale required to achieve the 1.5C temperature goal?
- What steps will the government take to address the £2 billion shortfall in funding for ICF goals?
- Will the Prime Minister attend COP29?
- Will the government confirm whether senior cabinet members will be attending COP29?
- Will the government appoint a Secretary of State-level Climate Envoy ahead of COP29?

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This briefing was researched by Uplift as the secretariat to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Climate Change.