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The world expects

When Glasgow hosts the COP 26 global climate summit next year, it will mark the most important moment of the climate challenge since Paris

By **Nicola Sturgeon**, First Minister of Scotland

Scotland is leading the way in climate action – setting one of the most robust legislative frameworks for emissions reduction in the world and doing so with a legal commitment to a Just Transition, where no one is left behind.

We are ambitious at home but are equally determined to work with our friends and neighbours across the world. Just as collaborative action has been central to tackling COVID-19, so too must the world come together to safeguard our environment.

2020 has been a year of unprecedented challenges for the world, with COVID-19 continuing to profoundly impact every aspect of our lives. Scotland, like all countries around the world, has faced the challenge of the pandemic with resolve, love and solidarity and that continues to be required of us all.

Despite heartening news of vaccine development, we remain steadfast in our approach to safeguarding our communities, protecting our National Health Service and saving lives. My thoughts are with all those in Scotland – and around the world – who have lost loved ones to this terrible virus.

Amid the darkness of a global pandemic, the climate emergency has not gone away. Scotland remains committed to ending our

contribution to climate change within a generation.

Our response to the global climate emergency is a core tenet of the work of all parts of government, and our commitment to achieving our world-leading goal of net zero emissions by 2045 – with 75 per cent reduction by 2030 – has never wavered.

Clearly circumstances have changed significantly since we legislated for our ambitious targets last year. But we are committed to a green recovery from COVID-19 in which we capture the potential opportunities of our transition to net-zero, including in green jobs, business growth and wellbeing. This is an approach that is fundamentally important

leave no one behind on the journey. That will be more important than ever as we face the economic fallout of COVID-19.

Scotland's just transition

This year, our Programme for Government set a national mission to create new jobs, good jobs and green jobs – protecting people from redundancy and unemployment, and investing in our Green New Deal. We will publish an update to our 2018 Climate Change Plan in December 2020, setting out a pathway to our emissions targets as part of a green recovery from COVID-19.

Moving to a net-zero economy over the coming decades has to happen in a

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to the future prosperity of our people and planet.

In Scotland we are committed to not only meeting our emissions targets but in doing so in a way that is fair and just. Our Climate Change Act, which we introduced in direct response to the Paris Agreement, not only sets out one of the toughest and most ambitious legislative frameworks in the world, but also underpins our targets with a commitment to Just Transition principles. These principles mean we will share in the benefits of decarbonisation and

way that not only tackles emissions, but also deals with inequality and poverty, and promotes wellbeing and a fair and inclusive employment market. The Scottish Government has committed to ensure that we have the infrastructure and skills needed to make an inclusive energy transition work, and that we support 'high-carbon' communities through the transition.

Scotland's oil and gas sector has world-class experience and expertise, including vital subsea skills, gained through 40 years of operating in the North Sea. The sector

◀ **Scotland's largest offshore windfarm, Beatrice in the Moray Firth, has a capacity of 588MW, enough to power 450,000 homes. Scotland has set a target of generating the equivalent of 100 per cent of its electricity demand from renewable sources by the end of 2020**

can help overcome the engineering and innovation challenges presented by moving to a net-zero future.

We support the industry's *Roadmap 2035*, which aims to decarbonise the remaining production in the North Sea, and we will continue to support our oil and gas businesses as they contribute to a sustainable, secure and inclusive energy transition.

While it is crucial that we take decisive action to reduce our emissions to net zero, we must also recognise that the

how people live their lives. COP26 must therefore also serve to show the positive opportunities that this transition will bring – it can create green jobs and prosperity, reduce pollution and waste, improve air quality, and improve people's wellbeing. It must also show the world that we are taking seriously the concerns of young people, many of whom are worried for their future and are rightly holding governments to account.

The outcome of the summit will affect us all, and therefore COP26 must be

world-leading targets and summarise our plans to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change.

We want Scotland's publication to be a positive step in the process of raising global ambition by a diverse range of actors ahead of, and at, COP26. By highlighting our own action, we hope that others will follow our lead in setting such ambitious targets ahead of the critical summit next year.

I am also proud to have taken on the role of European Co-Chair of the Under2 Coalition, a group of more than 220 national and sub-national governments representing over 1.3 billion people and 43 per cent of the global economy.

During this time, Scotland will work closely with our fellow members to build on green recovery plans, both in Scotland and internationally, promote high levels of ambition and climate action from members, and drive momentum from states and regions towards COP26 and beyond. We will also seek to champion inclusivity and promote Just Transition principles within the Coalition.

Of course, 2021 must also be an important year for biodiversity as we tackle the twin crises of climate change and ecological decline. The Convention on Biological Diversity Summit – COP15 – is currently due to take place in May next year, and in Scotland we are investing in large-scale peatland restoration projects and implementing ambitious tree-planting plans.

Internationally, we are playing an active role in shaping the post-2020 global biodiversity framework by publishing the Edinburgh Declaration and leading the international Edinburgh Process for Subnational and Local Governments on the development of the Post 2020 global biodiversity framework, which is anticipated to continue up to and at COP15.

I look forward to building on our existing partnerships, working with our friends and neighbours across Europe and the world, and hopefully welcoming COP26 to Glasgow next year as we commit to end the climate crisis within a generation. ●

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world's climate is already changing. The impact is felt in Scotland and across the globe, often with communities that have done the least to cause climate change being among the first to be affected by it. We must respond to this and prepare for the challenges that we will face as our climate continues to change.

Last year the Scottish Government published our second Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme in response to the challenges presented by a changing climate at home, while our Climate Justice Fund – the first in the world – supports communities to build resilience to climate change in Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia.

A fair and inclusive summit

Looking ahead to COP26, not only must this be a landmark summit in reducing global emissions and putting the world on track to net zero, but it must also ensure that this pathway is fair, just and leaves no one behind. Global efforts to tackle climate change must put people and communities first.

I know, however, that the transition to a net-zero global economy will require difficult choices that will impact

inclusive. Scotland's COP26 themes of Just Transition and People reflect this need. Delegates from across the world, from all sectors and communities, must be represented. This includes the Global South, women, civil society, young people and indigenous communities, as well as businesses, governments and sub-national actors.

COP26 must support the partnerships needed to deliver the global, transformational change required to tackle the climate crisis and pandemic.

International cooperation

Working with our partners to tackle climate change is at the core of the Scottish Government's approach, as is our strong support of multilateralism. It is more important than ever that we recommit to cooperation under a rules-based international system, working together to address the great global challenges we face and to build a better world for all our citizens.

In the spirit of international solidarity, we will be taking the novel approach of publishing *Scotland's contribution to the Paris Agreement – an indicative NDC* ahead of COP26. This document will focus on the fact that Scotland has already set