

Laurence Tubiana speech @ Green Alliance

Thank you for that warm introduction Shaun, and can I say it is wonderful to be among so many friendly faces, so many leaders, so many people who have given so much to ensure the UK is a greener and safer place for your children to live.

When I look back on our pathway towards delivering the Paris Agreement, I think of the immense contribution we received from civil society... from the faces here and the membership of Green Alliance.

You were on the front line when we needed you.

You pulled the levers of power when we called. Paris demonstrated we are stronger together - when we bring our skills, our membership, our passion to make a case for a safer planet.

That is why an organisation like Green Alliance is so important - harnessing the power of civil society and channelling towards those in office.

And it works. The Paris Agreement proves your power works.

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Yes – I'm French – but this is a country close to my heart because for decades the UK has been a true global leader on climate and the environment... and let's be clear - you didn't need the European Union to tell you what to do.

The path was clear to Prime Minister Thatcher in the 1980s

The UK was the first country to put climate onto the agenda of the UN Security Council

The first country to do a full economic risk assessment on climate with Lord Stern's Review

The first country to pass a Climate Change law with rolling 5 year targets all the way to 2050...

The first G7 economy to ban new coal... the fastest pace of decarbonisation of any major economy right now.

The first to phase out existing coal, and a founding member of the Powering Past Coal Alliance...

And for the first time in 2017 the UK generated more than half of its electricity from low-carbon sources...

This is leadership.

This is why the UK is so important.

This is why you all are so important.

You're part of an energy revolution that is happening all around you.

It's being driven by the UK scientists at the Met Office, Grantham Institute and other institutions at the forefront of academic research into climate risks and clean energy...

It's being driven by leaders like Mark Carney at the Bank of England who are ensuring the finance sector understands climate risk

It's being driven by a strong and passionate media - look at the impact of the Guardian's Keep It In The Ground Campaign, or indeed David Attenborough's Blue Planet series on the BBC

And it's being driven by a government that is still - as far as I can see - fiercely committed to ensuring we live in a climate safe world.

British diplomats such as Pete Betts - who many of you know - played a key role to deliver Paris... politicians like my friend Claire Perry are driving this agenda forward at the international level... and I applaud her for committing the UK to exploring what a net zero target will look like in a British context.

The 1.5 target is one of the most important aspects of the Paris Agreement, and it's vital governments show leadership on this now.

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All of this is rooted in cross-party consensus for action that must be guarded at all costs.

I understand only 5 MPs voted against the Climate Change Act when it was passed?

Look at Australia, the US, Poland, increasingly Germany. Make sure to protect what you have.

In what sometimes can feel an increasingly polarised world, this unity must be nurtured and preserved - common ground that we can use to make a stronger society.

As many of you know I am forever flying to foreign capitals to speak to governments... and the one thing many of them tell me is they wish they had a Committee on Climate Change as you have here... and I'm sure they all wish they had a Lord Deben to lead it too

As with the Paris Agreement, the success of the Climate Change Act proves that the impossible is possible.

A key principle in both deals is that they allow individual governments to implement their own policies. It sets the destination but leaves the journey open.

I think it's an important principle... and as we give credit to Labour for introducing the Act 10 years ago, so let's praise Conservatives and Liberal democrats for strengthening it, and the Scottish Government for aiming even higher.

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But friends - let us not forget this ambition is also rooted in the UK's leadership in Europe... and Britain's shared values with Europe.

I - for one - will miss the UK's voice in Brussels when you leave.

The UK dragged the rest of Europe to higher ambition on climate, it set up the Green Growth Group of climate-ambitious ministers and it pushed for higher carbon targets

Take it from me: the UK's alliance with the rest of the EU helped Europe punch above its weight in Paris...

In the frantic closing hours of that meeting when Amber Rudd was working with our presidency... this worked both ways – the UK made Europe stronger, and the support of 27 other member states added power to the UK's demands

This is a continent where leaders have committed to sustainable growth.

They have committed to using its economic clout to cut costs of renewable energy, promote electric vehicles, develop efficient public transport networks and – critically – offer a model for emerging economies to follow...

It's also a continent that recognizes that pollution is not simply a challenge for one country... we share pollution across our borders...

in the UK you know this from your work in the 1980s tackling acid rain that decimated forests in Scandinavia...

...in Europe we all share the costs of pollution, and we can share in the prize of delivering cleaner and greener cities for our children to live in

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But there are risks ahead – real risks that Brexit will diminish the UK's leadership role...

More than half of the current policies for meeting the UK's climate goals are derived from Brussels...

And whatever your view of the European Union, it does provide legal oversight of that ambition... which is important to keep government honest

I know in this room there are fears over what leaving the EU could mean not just for global climate change efforts but closer to home... the places and landscapes people in this country love, your campaigns to have cleaner air, better food standards and tougher animal welfare rules

There are fears over what it could mean for energy security, the cost of energy, new jobs... we have seen UK clean energy investment down more than 50% in the last 12 months and clean energy businesses cutting jobs...

I know that Green Alliance and GreenerUK has been working hard to ensure the UK has a strong environmental watchdog when you leave the EU.

For me it's vital this body has teeth, that it can compel this and future governments to stick with its commitments

I understand many of you are worried the government may not deliver this... and may not deliver the promised Green Brexit...

Remember – whatever we think about the current US administration – the EPA there still has the power to take government to court if it does not deliver on its commitments... so ask yourself – do you really want to have weaker environmental governance than the US?

No matter if you are for against Brexit: I do not believe anyone in Britain voted for their country to be more polluted

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Today I am setting 4 tests I believe we can use to judge the government's commitment to a Green Brexit... we should be in no doubt the next 12 months will be key to progress in decades to come and to keeping UK as a leader

First - Brexit or no Brexit there must be close cooperation with Europe on climate and energy so we can continue to work together to lead the world to climate safety.

We need the goals of the Paris Agreement to be embedded in UK's final deal with EU and future trade deals: this can be new way for the UK to lead the world once again.

Second – leaving Europe cannot be an excuse to weaken existing environmental laws

The government must replace the powers of the European Commission with equally strong rules, and enforcement powers for new institutions to deliver them... this is essential to protect the British people and protect European friends

Three – climate must rest at the core the government's vision for a Global Britain

For me - Global Britain is a Green Britain

It exists in the inspirational Powering Past Coal Alliance

It exists in Prime Minister May's upcoming summit on electric vehicles

And it exists in Claire Perry's commitment to deliver a new net zero target... and on that... can I just add – if we always aimed for what we knew we could achieve we would never have got the Paris Agreement!!

These are initiatives that will boost the British economy at home and deliver massive benefits across the world... a legacy all British governments would be proud of.

For me the signs are positive that UK wants to keep its position, but these initiatives will only be credible if there is delivery at home... which is my fourth test

While the collapse in emissions in the power sector here has been remarkable, the biggest barrier to UK sustaining its leadership is pollution from transport and homes

We know from the Lancet that 50,000 people die in the UK every year from air pollution... petrol and diesel cars are putting at risk children's health and UK's ability to meet climate targets.

We need to see the delivery of a solid plan to phase out the combustion engine by 2030

And there must be new money to support city leaders like the Mayors of London, Birmingham and Manchester to provide clean alternatives and a new clean air law

We need to address fuel poverty... we cannot leave elderly people to die in cold homes at winter, warmer homes must be a priority... and this will also deliver benefits for the NHS and the UK's climate targets

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Friends - I started talking about the people in this room at the start... and I will end with you

Because to prevent a dirty Brexit, and to hold your leaders to their promises on a Green one, it means we need more from all of you

We need a stronger climate movement in Britain and across Europe. And we need to take people with us.

That's why ECF was born and why we're here... it's why I'm here today asking for your help

We need to reach and engage people who are not yet climate campaigners but who share our vision of a safer, cleaner home

That means health campaigners, farmers, churches, trade unions.

It means conservatives, socialists, liberals and the 70% who are not allied to any party

It means business leaders and academics... and perhaps given the World Cup kicks off in 2 weeks time... it also means football fans

And most of all it means you. Everyone in this room.

As General Kitchener said over 100 years ago... your country needs you

I know for this leadership we can look to Shaun and his team at the Green Alliance

And I know for leadership we can look to you all

The transition to a cleaner future is within our grasp

It must be fair. We must care about where the costs fall and who benefits

In an age of fake news and media manipulation, we must ensure our voice is heard

We must speak truth to power, and use science as our foundation

If we do this we will win

If we do this the UK will maintain its role as a global force for higher ambition

And if we do this the UK will continue to be seen as a true leader in the world.