

National Statement by the Taoiseach, COP 26, Glasgow, 2 November 2021

Excellencies,

This is an important meeting for all of the world's people.

We come here as leaders, and it is vital that we offer the leadership the world now urgently needs.

Climate change is real – we are seeing its serious impacts already. The IPCC Report in August confirmed to us that it is widespread, it is rapid, and it is intensifying.

The scale of this change is unprecedented.

But, as the Report made clear, it is not too late.

Human actions still have the potential to determine the future course of climate, the very future of our planet.

To achieve our Paris goals, immediate, large-scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions are essential.

Unless we act now, we will not keep the possibility of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees alive.

The scientists are playing their part, in helping us to understand the dynamics of climate change and in developing the technologies and responses we need to limit its effect.

As political leaders, it is our responsibility to put the necessary policies in place.

Ireland is ready to play its part.

We have enacted legislation to put a legally binding target of reducing our emissions by 2030 to 51% below 2018 levels.

We will reach climate neutrality by 2050.

We are working closely with our EU partners in the green transition that will make Europe the first climate-neutral continent.

We are implementing a statutory system of carbon budgeting and emissions ceilings for each sector of the economy.

We are working at the UN Security Council to put the destabilising impacts of climate change firmly on the agenda.

We do not believe or accept, as some would have it, that it is too late; that the transition will be too costly; that it is inevitable that we will leave people behind; that someone else should shoulder the load.

We believe in the immense capacity of humans to work together and to achieve great things.

If we act decisively now, we will offer humanity the most valuable prize of all – a liveable planet.

We can achieve a cooler world. A biodiverse world. A world with healthier air for us to breathe, healthier soil for things to grow in. A world in which people can live more sustainable lives, handing a healing and enriched planet to future generations.

We can create a world in which human impact on all parts of our ecosphere – the land, the sea, the air - is brought back into balance.

Those of us in the developed world – those who have, frankly, contributed most to the problems that confront us all – have an obligation to support those who are most acutely challenged by their consequences.

Ireland accepts that obligation.

In support of achieving the \$100bn target, I am therefore pleased to announce today that Ireland will more than double its contribution to developing countries, so that we are delivering at least €225m a year by 2025.

As leaders, if we are to bring people with us on this journey of a lifetime we must also recognise and respect the real anxiety that many people feel when confronted by such an enormous challenge.

Our young people worry that there will be no worthwhile future for them to inherit.

Workers worry that their jobs will disappear, leaving them without a livelihood.

Consumers, already feeling the impact of energy price rises, feel that the transition will be too costly for them to bear.

In response, I say I will do everything in my power, working with all of the leaders here today, to make sure that it is not so.

To ensure that we will succeed in limiting emissions; to ensure that the transition we deliver is jobs-rich and economically sustainable; to ensure that there is real climate justice and nobody, in any part of the world, is left behind.

The IPCC report made it clear that every tonne of carbon warms the world.

Every second of delay makes our task that bit bigger.

Let us leave Glasgow with a renewed commitment to doing what we know needs to be done.

Let us move forward together now.