

# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Written Statement on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP25), Madrid**  |
| **DATE** | **18 December 2019** |
| **BY** | **Lesley Griffiths, Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs** |

### This year’s Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP25) nearly did not happen. Within the space of a few weeks, a new location was chosen, with supporting infrastructure and delegations. The drive and determination to make sure the event took place underlines the importance of continuing international dialogue on climate change. This year’s COP25 event took place in Madrid.

### I attended as part of the UK delegation. Wales may only be a small country, but our presence there demonstrated our big ambition on climate change and showed we are ready to play our part, recognising our global responsibility.

At the event, I attended the Under2 Coalition General Assembly, where we welcomed new members from across the globe. The coalition is made up of more than 220 Governments who represent over 1.3 billion people and 43% of the global economy. In times of global adversity and change, the role of state and regional governments is even more important as so much of the change needed is at the local level.

In the Assembly, I spoke about Wales input and commitment to the Future Fund, which **enables developing and emerging economies** to decarbonise in a climate just way. It is a real example of sustainable development in practice, with much-needed health and socio-economic benefits at the local level, where the impacts of climate change are already being felt. This scheme builds upon our Wales for Africa work, where we planted our 10 millionth tree this year.

At the event, I also spoke about the importance of COP26 next year, which will be key in taking forward the Paris Agreement. Next year’s COP Presidency is held by the UK for COP26 and will take place in Glasgow. This event is even more important now, as some of the key areas around the negotiations this year will need to be resolved and picked up over the next year, making COP26 as key event for international progress but more importantly action.

We must be prepared to take a clear message to COP to show Wales is a globally responsible nation, where everyone is ready to play its part. For a country which was at the forefront of the last industrial revolution, we have the ambition and ingenuity to be a leader in the low carbon revolution. We have already taken significant strides to ensure Wales leads by example towards a low carbon future. We published our first [Low Carbon Delivery plan](https://gov.wales/low-carbon-delivery-plan), setting out 100 policies and proposals across all areas of the economy. Recognising we also need to adapt to the impacts of climate change, we have published our cross government plan on how we deal with the impacts of climate change, [Prosperity for all- A Climate Conscious Wales](https://gov.wales/prosperity-all-climate-conscious-wales).

We have invested in key areas such as active travel, business, housing, projects across Wales to address biodiversity loss and wider ecosystem resilience and tree planting. This year’s data on our greenhouse gas emissions shows it has fallen to 25% compared to base year emissions**[[1]](#footnote-1).** In addition,through renewable sources we are generating enough electricity to meet half of Wales’s needs in 2018, whilst the investment we are making through our Welsh Government Energy Service is projected to save the Public Sector around £250 million and 857,000 tonnes of CO2 over the lifetime of the projects.

We have shown we are serious and now we need others to follow. In April 2019 we declared a climate emergency to galvanise action at home and internationally, from communities, business and public sector. In October, we held a conference with over 300 people from business, public and Third Sector organisations, recognising they are all agents for change. As part of the conference, we asked those organisations to pledge to take action with us so we can develop an *All Wales Plan* in 2021 and we can tell the world, Wales is collectively ready to play its part.

As a result of declaring a climate emergency, we have raised our ambition, recognising greenhouse gases must fall by 95% over the next 30 years if we are to make our fair contribution to the UK’s commitments made in the Paris Agreement. However, we have also set an ambition to go further and achieve Net Zero emissions. I am proud of the high bar Wales has set and hope that this encourages and inspires other nations around the world to step up to the task of addressing climate change in a fair and just way.

Next year we will ratchet our ambition up further. We will update our 2050 target and we will revisit our decarbonisation pathway in terms of our interim targets and carbon budgets. I have asked our independent advisory body the UK Committee on Climate Change for advice on this revised pathway, taking into account the Well-being of Future Generations Act. To help inform and develop their advice the UKCCC has now launched a [*Call for Evidence*](https://www.theccc.org.uk/the-sixth-carbon-budget-and-welsh-emissions-targets-call-for-evidence/)*,* which will also feed in to the work on the UK Government’s sixth carbon budget. It is important Welsh stakeholders feed in to this process and I expect the UKCCC to run events in Wales in January. We will consider the advice next year and bring revised targets and budgets to the National Assembly before COP26.

The challenge of climate change requires everyone to act. It is important we continually work together to drive action in the run up to COP26 and that everyone plays their part in the development of our next All Wales Plan.

*This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Assembly returns I would be happy to do so.*

1. Base years for UK greenhouse gas emissions are: 1990 for carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide; 1995 for the fluorinated gases. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)