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THE PRIME MINISTER

27 May 2008

Dear Nick

Thank you and your co-signatories for your letter of 28 January about the environment and climate change. I appreciate your kind words and recognition of the efforts and progress made during the Bali conference. A great deal of effort was put in across Government to achieve this historic agreement. At all levels in Government, we recognise that this is by no means the last step in this process; much work is required, in the short and long term, before our goals can be achieved.

I am very pleased to see the Construction Industry Council show real leadership on this issue. As representatives of the built environment sector, I am confident that by following through on this commitment, the Council will make a substantive contribution towards the United Kingdom meeting its emissions targets.

In responding to some of your specific points, the United Kingdom will maintain a leading role in tackling climate change at an international level. We will continue to work through the European Union, G8 and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to reach a truly global agreement to avert dangerous climate change. An international agreement to a realistic, robust and fair framework of commitments for the post-2012 period is central to delivering these objectives.

However, as your letter rightly points out, any international agreement must be underpinned by robust action on a national level. This is why we have introduced, and further strengthened, the Climate Change Bill with a statutory review of the target to reduce the UK's carbon emissions by at least 60 per cent by 2050. The Bill will also put in place five-year carbon budgets set on the advice of an independent climate change committee.

If we are to move the world to a truly low carbon economy, knowledge transfer will be vital. This will allow developing countries to progress along a different path to the industrialised nations, one that does not rely on fossil fuels and is sustainable. At this point, I would like to reassure you that the Government does not wish to deny any nation the right to develop – this is core to our policies, as laid out in the Stern Review. This is also why we have proposed a new fund at the World Bank to help developing countries reduce their emissions and adapt to climate change.

I am grateful for your offer to work closely with Government to achieve a binding and equitable agreement. Therefore, I have taken the liberty of forwarding your letter to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, asking him to meet with you and representatives of the Construction Industry Council to take forward your ideas. His office will be in touch shortly to make arrangements.

Thank you for writing and please accept my best wishes for every future success in meeting the challenges of climate change.



Yours sincerely



The Right Honourable Nick Raynsford MP