



British Embassy
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CLIMATE



Wilton Park

Report “Race for Our Planet” Friday 1 October 2021

This “All4Climate” Pre-COP side event was hosted by the British Embassy in Rome in collaboration with Wilton Park and with the support of Italy4Climate and the High-Level Champions Team.

The event was structured with two closed-doors sessions and a hybrid conference with High-Level Climate Champion **Nigel Topping**. Sessions were attended by UK, Italian and a range of international representatives from business, academia, civil society, regions, cities and government. The closed-door sessions were held under Chatham House rules to build a discussion around how the **Race to Zero** and **Race to Resilience** can help build global ambition and collaboration between non-state actors.

The Race to Zero

1. **Radical mitigation.** We have eight years to halve global emissions, which are still rising. We cannot just focus on easy or small changes; rather we need to make the biggest transformation we've ever made as a human race. This requires everyone stepping out of their comfort zone; doing more and faster. We must think and act radically and we must prompt the unignorable policy changes
2. **Ambition loop between private and public sector.** Pledges from businesses and local actors give rise to policy frameworks, which in turn promote more ambitious pledges. Joining the Race to Zero is in our economic interests because whoever fails to join risks losing pace with the future green economy. The Race will not stop with COP26; this is just the beginning,
3. **Business-specific.** Some sectors will take more time to decarbonise. The Race to Zero metrics for the oil & gas sector have not yet been defined. For others like steel the technology is developing fast. SMEs require tailored support, including access to finance. One way for SMEs to grow is to enter into partnerships with larger companies, however, more needs to be done to bridge this gap.
4. **Race to Trillions.** This is the third race that involves the investments required for the shift to a green economy. It's not about more money, but getting funding to the right places. We need criteria and global standards. The initiatives under the umbrella of the Race to Zero (e.g. Business Ambition for 1.5C) can help provide these criteria.
5. **Metrics.** The financial world demands metrics. The TCFD (Taskforce on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures) and TNFD (Taskforce on Nature-Related Financial Disclosures) can be a good place to start, together with the embedding of ESGs in decision-making. But overall we are lacking a universal definition of sustainability – there is an abundance of different standards and auditing procedures. We need to come together and set strong global standards so that credibility is rekindled as we go radical and big, whilst recognising the human rather than numerical needs and ensuring impact is not solely driven by what is measurable
6. **Radical collaboration.** We must come together to act radically and harness the synergies of scale. There is a question about how we can systematically work together. What gets measured gets done, although it's

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difficult to measure collaboration. The Race to Zero aims to bring convergence amongst members through pulling together guidance and expertise through existing initiatives. This is a need for harnessing the power of collaboration for an even greater impact.

7. **Radical transparency** is important to help consumers drive decision-making. We must ensure our efforts are focused on and in framed in a language which works for people – what does 2% mean on the ground? This includes transparency in supply chains across a whole range of sectors including construction, healthcare and fashion. In turn this helps put pressure on other sectors such as transport and industry.
8. **Greenwashing.** Transparency is also critical for avoiding greenwashing – which may come from all sectors, including the non-profit sector. The Race to Zero has structures in place to help ensure transparency, such as the enforcement of short-term targets and a framework for reporting. There is a question as to whether more structures are required around the specific issue of emissions offsetting. It is very important that offsetting does not come at the expense of emissions reduction.
9. **Behavioural change.** Radical change includes lifestyle change – a complex topic for policy-makers, for example we live in a fast fashion world, with the fashion industry contributing 4% to global GHG emissions and the supply chain difficult to map and the built environment is responsible for 40%. Large companies can lead change through scale, strategies and their links to civil society, business and government demonstrating both commercial and non-commercial win-wins. Non-state actors are influential not just in their specific sectors but in the wider trends they are able to influence. The media has a particular responsibility to engage with and inspire people, raising awareness about climate change while pointing to the positive aspects of a greener and less consumeristic lifestyle.
10. **Cradle-to-cradle principles:** The personal care industry is another example, producing 120bn single-use items of packaging per year. We can no longer afford to adopt a linear economy model, with the constant disposal of resources in landfill, incineration or the ocean. Many consumers want to be more sustainable. Harnessing behavioural change, moving from extraction to respect and using cradle-to-cradle principles and valuing reusable materials, we can design products that fit within the circular economy.

The Race to Resilience

11. **Resilience** is a lot about learning from the experience of communities that are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. We must not romanticise the conditions communities will endure, but should empower them to be hubs of resilience capabilities. For many countries mitigation is not an issue – they are barely responsible for emissions (e.g. the Fiji Islands). But the Race to Resilience is global because the effects are going to be felt everywhere, and the number of disasters is increasing.
12. **Disaster prevention.** Climate-resilient housing is one way for preventing the worst consequences. The Philippines is one of the areas at the highest risk of natural disasters. Almost half of the population is in need of housing improvement. Working with micro-finance institutions (MFIs) has proved successful in securing the loans that home-owners need to invest in these housing improvements and pre-emptive action has reduced the climate impact from post-disaster rebuilding..
13. **Regions and communities.** The importance of working with local governments, communities, farmers and indigenous peoples all as subject matters experts is not to be underestimated. Here we combine technology with traditional knowledge and creative solutions to NBS (e.g. organised seed banks in Indonesia). We need to connect investors with local actors to scale up solutions. Shifting from an extraction-based to a more socio-environmental approach needs to be at the heart of all business models, with a shift of decision-making power to members of the community. There is also great value for regions and cities to share best practice amongst themselves.
14. **Nature.** Nature-based solutions are critical for resilience-building, yet our connection to nature is very broken; we need to change our systems and way of thinking in order to reset our relationship with nature. Sometimes we face challenging policy environments there is also the overriding issue about how to make finance work with NBS, making respect for nature part-and-parcel of business practices. However, NBS can offer win-win-win solutions and as well as purely private investment in NBS, blended finance models are one way to unlock investments in this area.

Conclusions

1. We are only at the beginning of the Race. This is a Race where everybody wins or everybody loses. Radical transformations in policy, collaboration, lifestyles, finance and business models are required in order to create the scale of change required.
2. Some of the tools required for this shift can be supported by the initiatives and rigour under the Race to Zero and Race to Resilience: metrics and standards; platforms for collaboration; pooling of best practice. Yet more needs to be done to fill gaps in existing work and create a movement that is truly universal and inclusive of smaller entities.
3. Collaborating together, government, businesses, and civil society can flip the immense power of the market, transitioning from a destructive economic model to one which is respectful of the people and the planet.