



Crack the Crises: Together to tackle Covid, Injustice, Climate Change and Nature Loss

In 2020 we came together to fight COVID and its aftershocks. Millions of us answered the call of a 100-year-old veteran and a 23-year-old footballer. We showed up when it counted - for our NHS, for our children, for each other.

We can be proud of the resilience and kindness in our communities. This year we have to build on that community strength, making 2021 a year of renewal and recovery, both here at home and around the world.

If COVID has taught us anything, it is that none of us are safe until all of us are safe. It has shown us how interconnected we all are and how we all have a part to play in tackling even the biggest crises. It has also shown us – just as the climate crisis does - that that crises always deepen inequalities based on race, gender, age, class, disability and other intersecting inequalities. This reveals the need for a recovery that tackles inequality and discrimination in all its forms, for a future that is more equitable, just and sustainable.

The UK's response owes plenty to incredible health workers and scientists but it has also depended on each of us doing our bit. Some of the things we can be proudest of - emergency support to the homeless, help with family finances, more money for the NHS - show what is possible when we put people and the planet first.

Now we need that same drive as we build the recovery.

Later this year, the eyes of the world will be on us as world leaders come to the UK for summits bringing together the world's richest democracies (at the G7 meeting) and almost every government in the world (at the COP26 UN talks). All of them, in signing up to the Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Agreement, have already promised action. Those promises were made to all of us and will only be kept if all of us fight for them, together.

We know we have the power to create a better future, both through what we demand from those leaders and through the action we take in our own lives and neighbourhoods. This can be a massive year of people power, if we set ourselves one big task: now is the time to **crack the crises**. We must:

- Crack COVID. The coronavirus has illuminated both our resilience and our vulnerability - we've seen just how fragile our societies, our democracies and our economies can be when put under pressure.
- Crack poverty and injustice. Systemic injustices are leaving tens of millions of us struggling at home and around the world. We must tackle poverty and discrimination in all its forms.

- Crack the climate and ecological crises. Millions of people are already experiencing the nightmare of rapidly rising climate impacts which are costing lives, undermining our health, making homes uninhabitable and land unfarmable.

These are real crises, but they are solvable too, especially if we spot the connections between them. By coming together, we can get things back into balance and restore the relationships that have been broken.

That's why we are uniting to help each other, at home and abroad, and harnessing our collective power through our votes, our volunteering, our taxes and our consumer and lifestyle choices. Working together we can crack these three crises and build a new deal for 21st century sustainability, resilience and inclusion.

Building a better world starts here at home, with each of us, our politicians and business. It requires political leadership and building equitable and sustainable systems. If we all play our part, we can make sure that governments and corporations everywhere take action and are held accountable for the changes we need so that every single one of us can live a safe, free, dignified life. Together we can make sure we build a world worth handing on to our children.

CRACK THE COVID CRISIS

The most urgent priority is **fighting COVID and preventing future threats:**

- **None of us are safe until all of us are safe** - The development and equitable distribution of tests, treatments and vaccines is an urgent priority: the ACT-Accelerator global partnership of governments, scientists, health organisations, and businesses must be fully funded to deliver it. National pandemic preparedness plans and a global disaster risk finance initiative would help the most vulnerable communities predict, prepare and protect themselves from the biggest risks they face.
- **Health for all** - Universal health coverage is how we ensure everyone has a chance of fulfilling their potential. Just as the government and all of us as citizens need to support our NHS, we can also share our aid and expertise to make sure the world's most marginalised people get the healthcare they need. By taking a wellbeing approach to everything from economic decision-making to securing access to good health and nature for all, with a focus on the most marginalised, we can help to ensure all our communities thrive and both our mental and physical health is protected.
- **Focus on the frontline** - Essential workers, which include a majority female health workforce, should be paid and protected properly here at home and around the world. Opening and operating schools safely should be the number one priority, to repay our debt to a generation of children and young people who have sacrificed their education to keep us all safe. And because nobody should have to choose between their life and their livelihood, people should be supported to self-isolate and socially distance.

CRACK THE POVERTY AND INJUSTICE CRISIS

COVID has exacerbated existing inequalities, including across gender, class, race, age, disability or sexual orientation. Here in the UK, it has cost hundreds of thousands of people their jobs, created a youth unemployment crisis and left too many of us struggling to pay for the essentials, in particularly those who were already facing inequalities before the pandemic. Around the world the number of

extremely poor people could go up by 150 million, at least 15 million more cases of domestic violence have been predicted as a result of the pandemic, and famine is now a real risk in the world's toughest places. We have to build a just and green recovery, redoubling our efforts on **fighting poverty and injustice**, and correcting against the structural discrimination within our societies and economies. This also means advancing the "3 Es" of more gender equal economies and societies: educating girls, empowering women, and ending violence against women and girls:

- **Empower people** - Everyone everywhere should have healthy food, clean water, a safe home and an education that sets them up to thrive in the 21st century. That requires real investment in communities and marginalised groups that are struggling at home and abroad. It means tackling the global debt crisis, making sure the IMF and World Bank do their jobs properly for the poorest and most marginalised, delivering progressive taxation (including on the digital and carbon economies) and ensuring that all governments have enough support and flexibility to be able to invest in their people, starting with those who are furthest behind. Empowering people means addressing the structural inequalities that have left people poor and with fewer opportunities: This includes investing in the care economy, empowering the most marginalised women and girls to lead, and prioritising girls' education. It means action to close the digital divide, invest in millions of green jobs including for women, and provide emergency support when it's needed, whether that's through help to hungry children here at home or humanitarian action to prevent famine overseas. At 2021's Education, Gender, Food, Climate, Nutrition and Open Government summits the UK government must ramp up both the ambition and the pace of delivery and all of us need to "follow the money", ensuring our taxes are spent transparently and on keeping our promises, including to spend 0.7% of national income helping to save and change lives for the most marginalised and in the poorest countries.
- **Protect people** - Everyone everywhere should be safe. Governments must take a consistent stand against violations of human rights and international law, taking action to prevent conflict and support those harmed by it, including by resettling refugees. Through the Generation Equality summit we must help end violence against women and girls here at home and around the world. This includes recognition that violence against women and girls is a shadow pandemic and prioritising appropriate funding to address this important issue. Online hate and misinformation that undermines our societies and democracies should never be good business for any company. Trade deals should protect the rights of workers and our environment. And we need effective safety nets to build resilience against shocks.
- **Free people** - Everyone everywhere should be free. Nobody should be held back by poverty or discrimination: people should be free to determine their own destiny regardless of class, race, gender, disability, faith or sexual orientation. Active citizens including from diverse backgrounds and marginalised groups - whether they are environmental and human rights defenders, women's rights organisations, independent journalists or trade union members - must be safe to do their work and the voices of those least often heard - women, children and young people - must be central in defining and guiding all the work of the recovery.

CRACK THE CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

The immediate COVID emergency happened against a long-term backdrop of climate change and environmental destruction. All of us have a role to play through the choices we make about our diet and finances but individual action is not enough. We, as citizens, need to push our leaders to act now. As our historic hosting of COP26 approaches it is imperative that we increase our ambition in **fighting the climate and ecological emergencies**:

- **Take action now** - Our world is on course for catastrophic climate change. We face a race against time for the urgent action needed to limit global temperature rises to 1.5C and get the UK and the world on track for a zero-carbon economy. At COP26 governments need to come together to close the emissions gap through credible 2030 national targets. Everywhere we can, we need to go further and faster, making all decisions about housing, transport, energy, agriculture, fisheries, imports, and finance consistent with a just transition to a zero-carbon world. The economic recovery packages being designed right now must be used to dramatically accelerate the transition to a zero-carbon economy.
- **Put those hit worst first** - Climate change is costly, deadly and hits hardest those who are least responsible for causing it and facing intersecting discrimination, whether that is women in the poorest countries trying to provide water and food for their families, or working-class families hit by pollution and flooding here at home. As COP President the UK must show leadership both at home and abroad. Internationally they must secure breakthroughs to scale-up financial support for and sharing power with those hit hardest by the crisis, by increasing funding for adaptation and establishing new sources of finance for loss and damage. At home they need to deliver a green new deal including millions of good green jobs to provide more and better support for communities on the front line of the climate and ecological emergency.
- **Halt the decline of nature by 2030** - We are losing species apace, and our ecosystems are on the brink. But nature is crucial for tackling the climate crisis, for preventing infectious diseases like Covid, and deserves our protection in its own right. We need global and national commitments to halt and begin to reverse the loss of wildlife. At home, that means strict, legally-binding targets to halt the decline of habitats and species by 2030. In England, this “State of Nature” target should be set in the Environment Bill. To succeed, we will need a global effort to put nature into recovery across at least 30% of land and sea by 2030, in ways that support poverty alleviation and the protection of human rights. Protecting our remaining intact ecosystems, restoring degraded forests and wetlands and switching to sustainable land management practices are urgent priorities at home and abroad. As host of both the G7 and COP26 this year, the UK Government has a particular responsibility to lead on delivering these priorities.