

The UK and Sri Lanka lead on ‘Nitrogen for Climate and Green Recovery’ 27 – 29 April 2021, Colombo

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JOINT PRESS RELEASE

(British High Commission in Colombo and the Government of Sri Lanka)

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The British High Commission in Colombo and the Government of Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka this week held a virtual event “*Nitrogen for Climate and Green Recovery*”, held on 27 – 29 April 2021, in Colombo.

The event launched the #Nitrogen4NetZero initiative, to widen engagement on sustainable nitrogen management in this crucial year for climate action.

Colombo, 5 May 2021



#Nitrogen4NetZero is an initiative launched in partnership between the British High Commission, Colombo and the Government of Sri Lanka, championed by H.E. the President of Sri Lanka. The two key messages are that Net Zero will be impossible to achieve without action on nitrogen, and that action on nitrogen will offer multiple co-benefits for health, nature and economy.

Delivering a statement to the event, on behalf of His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka Gotabaya Rajapaksa, Foreign Minister Hon. Dinesh Gunawardena emphasised that:

“...Climate scientists have been studying and grappling with the impact of increased carbon dioxide emissions in the atmosphere for decades. I believe it is important to address the issue of nitrogen waste in a similarly urgent way, and to broaden the ongoing discourse on climate change accordingly.”

Speaking last year COP26 President-Designate Alok Sharma had underlined the importance of joint action on climate change this year:

“Tackling climate change is the one of the most urgent shared endeavours of our lifetimes, demanding bold action from every nation to prevent catastrophic global warming’.....2021 is absolutely going to be a critical year for climate. I want to see the golden thread of climate action woven through every international event on the road to Glasgow.”

The United Kingdom will host COP26 in Glasgow later this year, and as the incoming Presidency are committed to working with Sri Lanka to accelerate climate ambition in 2020 and 2021.

At COP26, the United Kingdom will demonstrate the urgency and the opportunities of the journey towards a zero carbon economy and the power of international cooperation to address the gravest challenges the world faces. To ensure success countries need to commit to reaching net zero carbon emissions as soon as possible.

However, the transition to net zero emissions will also require action on nitrogen to reduce nitrous oxide, a greenhouse gas with a global warming potential around 300 times that of carbon dioxide. A focus on reducing nitrogen pollution offers multiple win-wins across sustainable development for air, water, biodiversity, stratospheric ozone depletion, soils, food and the economy. These issues have been recognized by the UN Environment Assembly Resolution on ‘Sustainable Nitrogen Management’ ([UNEP/EA.4/Res.14](#)), led by India, and the [Colombo Declaration](#) led by Sri Lanka, which agreed an ambition to halve nitrogen waste from all sources by 2030, offering the potential to save \$100 billion annually.

The #Nitrogen4NetZero initiative with member countries of the South Asian Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) prepares the way to widen engagement in this crucial year for climate action. The initiative is being prepared with science support from the “GCRF South Asian Nitrogen Hub”, supported by UK Research and Innovation through

its Global Challenges Research Fund. The hub forms part of a global effort working in partnership with the UN Environment Program and the Global Environment Facility through the International Nitrogen Management System, led by the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology.

Further information

For details about the ‘Nitrogen for Climate and Green Recovery’ event and for further information on #Nitrogen4NetZero, visit <https://www.inms.international/nitrogen4netzero/events>

The #Nitrogen4NetZero launch video is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6noMqW5JfY>

The “South Asian Nitrogen Hub” of the Global Challenge Research Fund is a £20M program supported by from UK Research & Innovation (UKRI), working in partnership with all eight countries of the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP). It is coordinated by the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology. See “Nitrogen pollution is no laughing matter” <https://www.ceh.ac.uk/press/nitrogen-pollution-no-laughing-matter>