



Press Release

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Use pandemic recovery for green future, universities demand

An international coalition of leading climate research universities – including the University of Edinburgh – has issued its first declaration ahead of the G20 Summit.

The International Universities Climate Alliance statement implores world leaders to use the post-Covid-19 recovery to implement measures to counteract climate change.

It warns that failure to do so will guarantee catastrophic consequences for generations to come.

Leaders of the world's 20 biggest economies will meet in Saudi Arabia on 21 and 22 November 2020.

Edinburgh is one of the founding members of the Climate Alliance and its only Scottish member.

Launched in April 2020 by the University of New South Wales Sydney, the group consists of 48 universities spanning all populated continents. It represents one-third of the 100 highest performing climate research universities and a quarter of the top 100 environmental research universities worldwide.

Edinburgh is an established global leader in climate science. For example, Professor David Reay is co-leading the UK Government's development of a long-term plan to chart out the skills needed to help deliver a net zero economy.

The University is also home to the International Center for Earth Data (ICED), a satellite-based system which will vastly improve monitoring and forecasting of extreme weather and natural disasters anywhere in the world.

It has expertise in areas such as carbon capture and storage, how climate change is affecting land use and agriculture, and how different management techniques can protect the livelihoods and wellbeing of local populations affected by shifting ecosystems.

Professor Peter Matheson, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Edinburgh, said Edinburgh's students, staff and alumni already play a vital role in providing the skills and expertise needed to underpin a truly green recovery around the world.

"We are proud to be part of this powerful alliance of universities and its clarion call for G20 leaders to deliver a green and climate resilient recovery from Covid-19.

"Our great strengths in climate change research and innovation provide the robust evidence base needed for good decision making at all levels – from informing the University's own pathway to net zero emissions by 2040, through working with local communities and businesses to build capacity and enduring partnerships, to advising cities and national governments on how to realise a sustainable and equitable transition to net zero for all."

The Climate Alliance is unprecedented in scale and scope, organisers say, and will support world leaders, policy makers and industry in planning for, and responding to, climate change. Its



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formation comes at a time when momentum is building for countries to decarbonise their economies.

The Alliance will provide a central hub for universities to share the latest climate research and enable greater collaboration between leading research teams.

Professor Ian Jacobs, President and Vice-Chancellor of UNSW Sydney, said he and his colleagues recognised the need for experts with diverse voices to speak out about the climate crisis.

“Many challenges lie ahead of us in combatting the existential crisis in which the world finds itself. The International Universities Climate Alliance is a rich resource upon which governments, business, industry and the wider community can rely for evidence-based expert advice.”

For further information, please contact: Edd McCracken, Press and PR Office, 0131 651 4400, edd.mccracken@ed.ac.uk