

FOREWORD



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The Rt Hon Tony Blair, MP UK Prime Minister

Climate change is the world's greatest environmental challenge. It is now plain that the emission of greenhouse gases, associated with industrialisation and economic growth from a world population that has increased six-fold in 200 years, is causing global warming at a rate that is unsustainable.

That is why I set climate change as one of the top priorities for the UK's Presidency of the G8 and the European Union in 2005.

Early in the year, to enhance understanding and appreciation of the science of climate change, we hosted an international meeting at the Hadley Centre in Exeter to address the big questions on which we need to pool the best available answers:

'What level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is self-evidently too much?' and 'What options do we have to avoid such levels?'

It is clear from the work presented that the risks of climate change may well be greater than we thought. At the same time it showed there is much that can be done to avoid the worse effects of climate change.

Action now can help avert the worst effects of climate change. With foresight such action can be taken without disturbing our way of life.

The conference provided a scientific backdrop to the G8 summit. At the Gleneagles meeting the leaders of the G8 were able to agree on the importance of climate change, that human activity does contribute to it and that greenhouse gas emissions need to slow, peak and reverse. All G8 countries agreed on the need to make 'substantial cuts' in emissions and to act with resolve and urgency now.

There was agreement to a new Dialogue on Climate Change, Clean Energy and Sustainable Development between G8 and other interested countries with significant energy needs. This process will allow continued discussion of the issues around climate change and measures to tackle it and help create a more constructive atmosphere for international negotiations on future actions to reduce emissions.

This book will serve as more than a record of another conference or event. It will provide an invaluable resource for all people wishing to enhance global understanding of the science of climate change and the need for humanity to act to tackle the problem.

Tony Blair