

28 January 2008



Construction Industry Council

Rt. Hon. Gordon Brown MP
The Prime Minister
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Dear Prime Minister,

We are writing to you as the leaders of the professions responsible for the procurement, planning, design, construction, management and maintenance of the built environment, which contributes as much as 50% of the greenhouse gas emissions responsible for climate change.

We are pleased and relieved that, against the odds, the Bali conference ended with the beginnings of an international agreement on limiting national carbon emissions. We appreciate the efforts made by your Government to secure this outcome. However, the next two years will be crucial for turning the tentative steps at Bali into a detailed, equitable and binding agreement that we believe to be the essential foundation for action to avert the worst consequences of climate change.

We welcome your acknowledgement, in presenting the Climate Change Bill that the evidence suggests that the UK may need to achieve an 80% reduction by 2050. We also welcome the Government's commitment to make all new homes and all new schools zero carbon by 2016.

All of us are committed to help government deliver on these targets. Our members are responding in ever larger numbers to the challenge of climate change and we are supporting them in the development and the sharing of the knowledge required. However in the long term our combined efforts will only make sense if all countries set out on the path to verifiably limit global emissions by 2050 to stabilize atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases.

National emissions limits must be equitable and allow the developing nations to build their economies and achieve decent standards of living for their populations. Our organisations all have a worldwide membership and this adds extra conviction to our position on the pressing need for such a global agreement to tackle this global problem.

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In his report on the Economics of Climate Change, Sir Nicholas Stern identified carbon trading, taxation and regulation as the three key issues for mitigating climate change. A binding and enforceable international agreement is the overarching enabling structure for these instruments. It would create a level playing field and stable trading conditions that would direct market forces towards innovation and delivering the essential solutions. It would make sense of the targets towards which taxation and regulation are to be directed.

We urge you and your government to give the highest priority to achieving such a binding and equitable agreement. We stand ready to assist you in this vital task and would be delighted to meet at your convenience to discuss how our collective organisations, with their combined worldwide membership of 500,000 built environment professionals could most effectively work with you to achieve our shared goal of reducing global carbon emissions.

Yours sincerely,

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The Rt. Hon. Nick Raynsford MP
Chairman,
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