



Annual Transition Statement on Climate Action in 2017 Briefing by the Stop Climate Chaos coalition*

Introduction

- Under the 2015 [Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act](#), the Government must present an [Annual Transition Statement](#) to each House of the Oireachtas by 10 December. The Transition Statement is [scheduled](#) to be presented in the Seanad by Minister Naughten and Minister Ross at 2.45pm on Wednesday 29 November and by Minister Phelan at 2.15pm on Thursday 30 November. Ministers will present the Statement in the Dáil next week.
- As part of this update, all relevant Ministers (for energy, transport, agriculture and housing) are required to provide statements on measures undertaken to reduce emissions in their respective sectors, including an assessment of their effectiveness.
- This year's Statement involves an update on climate actions in 2017. Minister Naughten is required to provide information on measures undertaken to reduce polluting emissions, actions taken to adapt to the effects of climate change, the Environmental Protection Agency's latest record of Ireland's polluting emissions, as well as State compliance with relevant EU/international law.
- **Proposed questions for the Ministers** are set out on **page 5**. **Recommendations for action** across the polluting sectors are included in the Appendix on **page 7**.

What must the National Transition Statement cover?

- **It is important to be clear that this statement is not designed to be a mere high-level summary of climate-relevant initiatives.** There is a long-term objective and the Government must demonstrate with absolute clarity how it is (or more accurately, how it is not) making progress towards that goal. The 2015 Climate Act stipulates that the Statement must clarify efforts made towards the achievement of Ireland's *National Transition Objective*, which is a 'low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by the end of the year 2050'.
- In relation to the goal of achieving a *low carbon* economy, the 2014 [National Policy Position](#) provides the context. It clarifies the level of 'mitigation', or reductions in polluting emissions, that must be achieved. Specifically, the National Policy Position sets out that policy development to 2050 will be based on:
 - *an aggregate reduction in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions of at least 80% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2050 across the electricity generation, built environment and transport sectors; and*
 - *in parallel, an approach to carbon neutrality in the agriculture and land-use sector, including forestry, which does not compromise capacity for sustainable food production.*
- Therefore, the Transition Statement must clarify the specific quantity of emissions that have been reduced by each policy measure in the past year **and** evaluate the progress of new and existing measures that have been implemented (i.e. not merely decided or planned). To put it another way, the Statement, like a financial report, must be specific on how much savings have been banked, so that the State progresses towards 'balancing its carbon books'. **Where these 'savings' have not been made, are insufficient, unclear or are dependent on future decisions/actions, it is vital that the Government is held to account.**

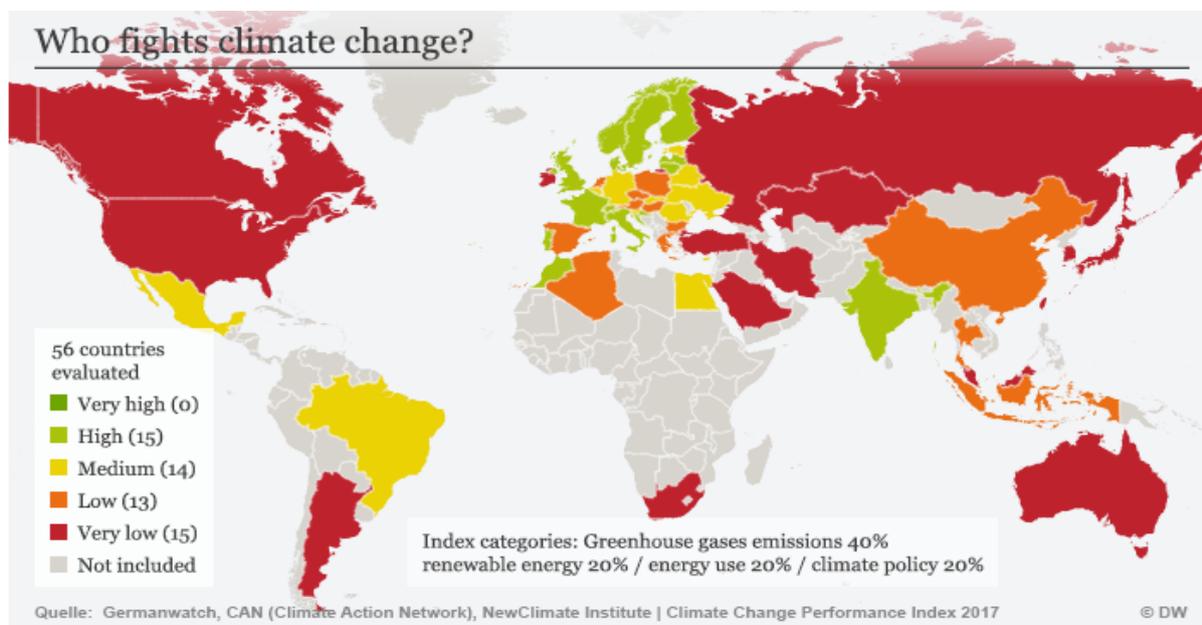
What is Ireland's performance on climate change?

- [Analysis](#) by Stop Climate Chaos has shown that in order to be consistent with the National Transition Objective, emissions from everything bar agriculture must decrease by 5% a year, every year from now to 2050, while emissions from agriculture will have to be at least halved from now to 2050.

- Yet Ireland's emissions continue to increase at an alarming rate and the Government's ongoing failure has been repeatedly raised at national and EU level by both independent and State authorities. Just this week, the Environmental Protection Agency released its [latest analysis](#) which shows that Ireland's emissions increased markedly in 2016, following another substantial increase in 2015. **National emissions increased by over 7% in just two years with significant increases across all [the main polluting sectors](#).**

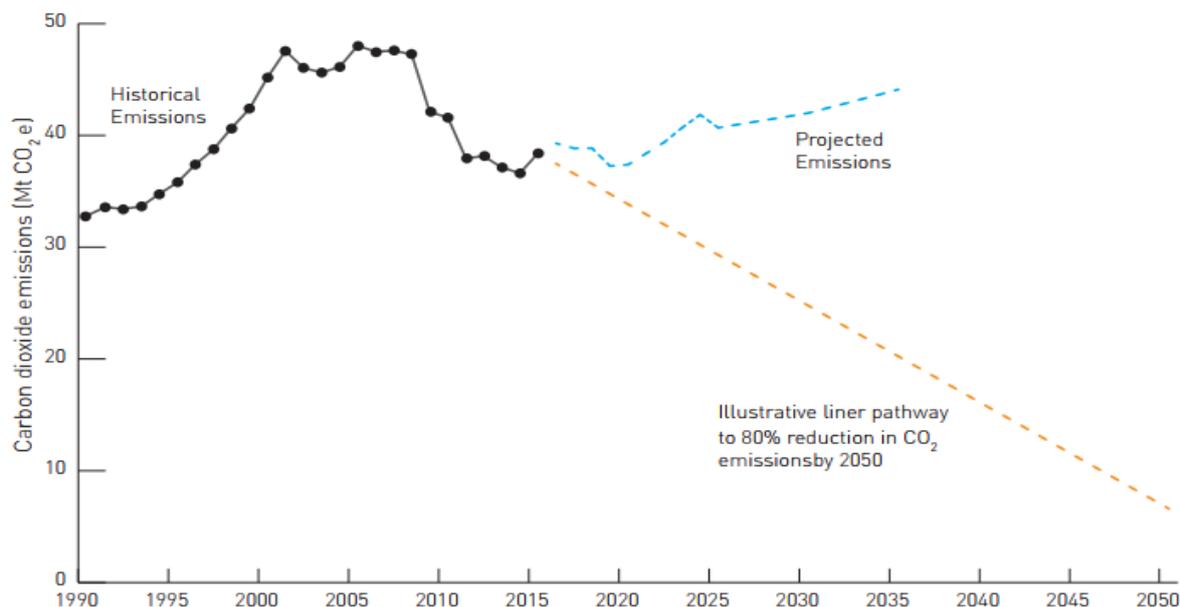
- The EPA has stated: *"Achieving Ireland's long-term decarbonisation objective can only take place with a **transformation of our energy, agriculture and transport systems**. We need to adopt a much greater sense of urgency about **reducing our dependence on fossil fuels** while radically improving energy efficiency. In relation to agriculture, Ireland must optimise agricultural production to ensure long term environmental integrity and sustainability. The growth in this sector, particularly for dairy and other cattle, points to **very significant risks in relation to meeting our decarbonisation objectives**."*

- Earlier this month, the EU's independent advisory body on climate change, the European Environment Agency, produced its [annual overview](#) of emissions reductions. Ireland is the third highest producer of emissions per person in the EU and is one of seven EU Member States which is set to miss its EU 2020 emission reduction targets under the EU Effort Sharing Decision. **Crucially, Ireland is the only one of this group where emissions are predicted to continue to rise.** It is also noted that the state will likely fail to comply with its 2020 commitments even with the use of generous flexibility and accounting procedures and it is stated that Ireland must immediately implement additional measures.



- Also in November, Ireland was ranked the worst performing country in Europe for action on climate change. The [Climate Change Performance Index](#), which is produced annually on the basis of joint analysis by two leading European think-tanks, placed Ireland 49th out of 56 countries, a drop of 28 places from last year.

Ireland's current and projected CO₂ emissions 1990 – 2050¹



Emissions of carbon dioxide in Ireland from 1990 to 2015 (black line) and projections ('with existing measures'; dashed blue line) from 2016 to 2035.

In July 2017, Ireland's Climate Change Advisory Council produced its first [Periodic Review Report](#), which provides an independent, expert assessment of Ireland's performance on climate change. The Council stated: *Ireland is unlikely to meet its [EU] 2020 targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by a substantial margin. This will have implications not only for 2020, but also for compliance with 2030 targets. It is urgent that **effective additional policies are implemented to place the economy on an environmentally sustainable pathway to a low-carbon Ireland in 2050....** While compliance with the 2020 target can be achieved through the purchase of emission units, this is not a cost-effective long-term solution and will not generate any co-benefits. In addition, **delaying action will make the required adjustment in the period to 2030 more costly.***

Analysis by the [Department of Public Expenditure & Reform](#), and by [UCC](#), has shown that without new, immediate and substantive efforts to cut emissions, Ireland faces financial penalties in the region of €500 million by 2020 for failing to comply with our EU climate and renewable energy commitments. Analysis by the IIEA estimates that Ireland may face non-compliance costs of between [€3bn and €6bn by 2030](#) for failing to reduce emissions unless further action is taken.

What is Ireland's strategy for climate action?

- **Over the last two decades, Irish climate policy has been undermined by a major implementation gap, both pre- and post-recession.** Ireland's lack of progress in reducing polluting emissions is extremely concerning given the considerable environmental, social, health and economic costs of inaction.

- After 5 years without any national strategy for reducing emissions across the main sectors, the [National Mitigation Plan](#) was published in July this year. The National Mitigation Plan sets out

¹ Climate Change Advisory Council, 2017 Periodic Review Report, Figure 4.1 based on EPA data. http://www.climatecouncil.ie/media/CCAC_REVIEWREPORT2017.pdf

measures to reduce polluting emissions across the main sectors over the next five years. However, many of the Plan's 106 listed measures are **old or involve promises to make future decisions**. The Stop Climate Chaos coalition is particularly **alarmed that the Plan does not put Ireland on a pathway to meeting 2020 and 2030 obligations at EU level or our own national 2050 commitments**. The Plan also fails to demonstrate any intention to enhance climate action in line with Ireland's commitments under the Paris Agreement.

- Professor John Fitzgerald, Chairman of the National Change Advisory Council [stated](#): ***'The plan has many ideas for action but it contains very few decisions.'*** Professor Fitzgerald further noted in [his advice](#) to the Citizens' Assembly, ***'The Council found that, while the plan identified a range of actions, it lacked commitment to concrete new policies and measures that would reduce our emissions. The Council believes that the government needs to urgently introduce a range of new policies and measures to put Ireland on track to meet its climate change targets for 2030 and 2050.'***

- The focus of the Plan on short-term 'cost effectiveness' in individual sectors is also inadequate and will not serve Irish society or an orderly transition of the economy. As detailed by Stop Climate Chaos in its original consultation [submission](#), the Government has not accounted for several other key areas with major financial implications:

- The severe climate impacts on vulnerable communities both nationally and globally
- The benefits of moving to a low carbon future - from job creation, to improved health, warmer homes, and lower bills.
- The high cost of non-compliance with EU targets
- The ever-increasing costs associated with delayed action
- The spill-over effects and risks from inaction

- Given these severe shortcomings and taking into account that the National Mitigation Plan is a critical component Irish policy-making for the next 5 years, the Stop Climate Chaos coalition is particularly concerned by the absence of political and public debate on the adequacy of the Plan. **As the National Mitigation Plan is a key 5-year strategy that will often outlive the Government that introduces it, it is vital that the Plan is debated and voted on by the Oireachtas. In order to ensure this scrutiny is provided, we would request that parties commit parliamentary time for a debate and vote on the National Mitigation Plan as soon as reasonably practicable, this year or in early 2018.**

- The Stop Climate Chaos coalition welcomed the commitment in the National Mitigation Plan to improve consideration of climate change in state planning decisions. As noted by the Climate Change Advisory Council, '[d]ecisions taken on investments in infrastructure and assets will have an impact on emissions in Ireland for decades to come.' **However, it is extremely concerning that this forward-planning is not evident in decisions taken in the 2018 Budget.** The state's own figures indicate that we need to invest **€2 billion every year from now to 2030 in order to make our homes warmer and less polluting**. However, following the €130m which the SEAI delivered in 2016, the 2018 Budget will only deliver an additional €38 million for energy savings schemes. It was also announced that €7 million would be made available to incentivize renewable heat generation. However, the proposed support scheme excludes community scale projects. Similarly, while Minister Naughten announced last week that €28 million has been secured for the Better Energy Community scheme next year, rooftop solar panels have been excluded from the proposed renewable electricity support scheme. On transport, while the roads development programme will see a total of €2.4 billion invested over four years, **only €35 million was set aside to support low-carbon projects and only €10million additional funding was allocated to cycling and walking.**

Citizens' Assembly's Mandate for Action and Recommendations to Government

- In August 2017, the Stop Climate Chaos coalition put forward 18 recommendations (see **Appendix below**) in its [submission](#) to the Citizens' Assembly in order to move Ireland from its current position as the climate laggard of Europe and to ensure Ireland catches up with most of our EU partners and

meets its EU commitments. And although Ireland is far from leadership and the State's record is poor, the recommendations also included actions through which the State could show true leadership. Many of these solutions are well-known and involve a range of policies across all sectors of the economy to immediately and substantively reduce damaging emissions.

- On the 5th of November, following four days of presentations from international and national experts, the Citizens' Assembly voted to make [13 recommendations](#) (see **Appendix below**) for state action on climate change. These common-sense, practical proposals address many of the same areas raised by the Stop Climate Chaos coalition. Most importantly, **the recommendations clearly indicate that the Irish public is prepared to back immediate and strong action to tackle climate change.** The Government has the political mandate to urgently implement new and effective policies and to ensure the weaknesses of the National Mitigation Plan are overcome.

Proposed Questions for Ministers

- The main outcome of the recent UN summit on climate change was a renewed focus on steps to increase pre-2020 climate action in order to ensure that the key goals of the Paris Agreement can be achieved. This outcome was welcomed by Minister Naughten in Ireland's national statement. Yet *[as outlined above]*, Ireland's polluting emissions are continuing to rise at an alarming rate and current policies will not be enough to ensure that Ireland meets its 2020 commitments. Given these circumstances, and taking into account that the National Mitigation Plan has been repeatedly described by Minister Naughten as a 'living document', **what are Minister's plans to revise the National Mitigation Plan, including in light of the recommendations from the Citizens' Assembly?**

- The Chair of the Climate Change Advisory Council, Professor Fitzgerald, spoke at the recent Citizens' Assembly meeting on climate change and highlighted the fact that the National Mitigation Plan included lots of ideas but no new decisions. **What new decisions, referenced in the National Mitigation Plan or since then, has the Department taken this year that has led to a concrete reduction in projected emissions?**

- Currently the Departments appear unwilling to take decisions that will lead to concrete emissions reductions until some non-specified later date, but they are quite willing to take decisions that will lock us in to high carbon infrastructure and increasing emissions. The granting of permits for fossil fuel exploration of the Porcupine basin this summer took many of us by surprise. **What decisions has the Department taken this year that will lead to an increase in emissions?**

- The Citizens' Assembly made a number of important recommendations – their first one highlights the need for climate change to become central to decision-making. Whilst the Citizens' Assembly recommendations have yet to be taken up in the Oireachtas, **how do we ensure that in 2018 policy decisions which threaten to lock Ireland into increasing emissions are subject to democratic scrutiny?**

- The Minister referred to the launch of a National Dialogue on Climate Change, seeking views and ideas on how to deliver the transition in Ireland. A number of proposals that have been put to the Government this year have significant public support – solar, fossil fuel divestment, public transport and walking/cycling, **how have these proposals been taken up by the Departments? How does the Government plan to follow up on the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly? What difference will the Dialogue make if the Government is showing no inclination to take on sound, evidence-based proposals that have a broad base of support?**

- At the recent climate summit in Bonn, Minister Naughten noted as part of Ireland's national statement that the National Mitigation Plan puts Ireland on a 'clear pathway to achieve our own decarbonisation targets'. In light of expert analysis by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Climate Change Advisory Council, the Stop Climate Chaos coalition is of the view that the only clarity

which exists is that Ireland is the National Mitigation Plan does not put Ireland on track to achieve our decarbonisation targets. The National Mitigation Plan refers to the production by 2020 of Transition Pathway Scenario to 2050. **What will the process be between now and 2020 for the development of those scenarios? Can the Minister confirm these scenarios will set out a transition pathways reflective of the global carbon budget under the Paris Agreement?**

*Stop Climate Chaos is the civil society coalition campaigning for Ireland to do its fair share to tackle climate change. Our 33 members include overseas aid and development, environmental, youth and faith-based organisations:

Afri, BirdWatch Ireland, Christian Aid Ireland, Comhlámh, Community Work Ireland, Concern Worldwide, Cultivate, Cyclist.ie, Dublin Friends of the Earth, Eco Congregation Ireland, ECO UNESCO, Feasta, Fossil Free TCD, Friends of the Earth, Good Energies Alliance Ireland, Gorta-Self Help Africa, Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice, Just Forests, Kimmage Development Studies Centre, Latin America Solidarity Centre (LASC), Liberia Solidarity Group, Methodist Church of Ireland – Council of Social Responsibility, Mountmellick Environmental Group, National Youth Council of Ireland, Oxfam Ireland, Peoples Climate Ireland, Presentation Ireland, Tearfund Ireland, Trócaire, An Taisce, VITA, V.O.I.C.E., and Young Friends of the Earth

Appendix

Recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly to the Oireachtas on 'how to make the State a leader in tackling climate change', 5 November 2017

<p>1. 98% of the Members recommended that to ensure climate change is at the centre of policy-making in Ireland, as a matter of urgency a new or existing independent body should be resourced appropriately, operate in an open and transparent manner, and be given a broad range of new functions and powers in legislation to urgently address climate change.</p> <p>2. 100% of the Members recommended that the State should take a leadership role in addressing climate change through mitigation measures, including, for example, retrofitting public buildings, having low carbon public vehicles, renewable generation on public buildings and through adaptation measures including, for example, increasing the resilience of public land and infrastructure.</p> <p>3. 80% of the Members said they would be willing to pay higher taxes on carbon intensive activities</p> <p>4. 96% of the Members recommended that the State should undertake a comprehensive assessment of the vulnerability of all critical infrastructure (including energy, transport, built environment, water and communications) with a view to building resilience to ongoing climate change and extreme weather events. The outcome of this assessment should be implemented. Recognising the significant costs that the State would bear in the event of failure of critical infrastructure, spending on infrastructure should be prioritised to take account of this.</p> <p>5. 99% of the Members recommended that the State should enable, through legislation, the selling back into the grid of electricity from micro-generation by private citizens (for example energy from solar panels or wind turbines on people's homes or land) at a price which is at least equivalent to the wholesale price.</p> <p>6. 100% of the Members recommended that the State should act to ensure the greatest possible levels of community ownership in all future renewable energy projects by</p>	<p>7. 97% of the Members recommended that the State should end all subsidies for peat extraction and instead spend that money on peat bog restoration and making proper provision for the protection of the rights of the workers impacted with the majority 61% recommending that the State should end all subsidies on a phased basis over 5 years.</p> <p>8. 93% of the Members recommended that the number of bus lanes, cycling lanes and park and ride facilities should be greatly increased in the next five years, and much greater priority should be given to these modes over private car use.</p> <p>9. 96% of the Members recommended that the State should immediately take many steps to support the transition to electric vehicles.</p> <p>10. 92% of the Members recommended that the State should prioritise the expansion of public transport spending over new road infrastructure spending at a ratio of no less than 2-to-1 to facilitate the broader availability and uptake of public transport options with attention to rural areas.</p> <p>11. 89% of the Members recommended that there should be a tax on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from agriculture. There should be rewards for the farmer for land management that sequesters carbon. Any resulting revenue should be reinvested to support climate friendly agricultural practices.</p> <p>12. 93% of the Members recommended the State should introduce a standard form of mandatory measurement and reporting of food waste at every level of the food distribution and supply chain, with the objective of reducing food waste in the future.</p> <p>13. 99 % of the Members recommended that the State should review, and revise supports for land use diversification with attention to supports for planting forests and encouraging organic farming.</p>
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encouraging communities to develop their own projects and by requiring that developer-led projects make share offers to communities to encourage greater local involvement and ownership.

Recommendations from the Joint Submission of the Stop Climate Chaos Coalition and the Environmental Pillar to the Citizens' Assembly, 11 August 2017

A) Longstanding recommendations that would help Ireland meet its existing targets.

1. Confirm now that Ireland will stop burning peat for electricity in 2020 and immediately set up an inter-agency task force to ensure training and employment opportunities for those employed in supplying and operating Ireland's 3 peat-fired stations and for impacted communities. (The Government was first advised to stop burning peat for electricity in 1998)
2. Confirm now that Ireland will stop burning coal for electricity in 2022 and immediately set up an inter-agency task force to ensure training and employment opportunities for those employed in Moneypoint coal-burning power station. (The Government was first advised to stop burning coal for electricity in 1998)
3. Realign investment to achieve the goals of the 2009 Smarter Travel Policy, increasing the share of transport investment that goes to walking, cycling and clean public transport.
4. Mobilize significant funds to offer financing options and project management support to households to upgrade the energy performance of their homes (e.g. the Tipperary Energy Agency Super Home scheme).

B) Best practice from other countries that would kick-start a real transformation

5. Where a developer is proposing a renewable energy project, make it compulsory that they offer 20% of the ownership to the local community through reasonably priced shares (as is the case in Denmark).
6. Kick-start community ownership of renewable energy by introducing a fair payment for solar electricity (as happens in the UK and Germany for example). Right now there

C) Areas where Ireland could take a global leadership role

10. 50% of the subsidy for peat-firing of power stations should be ring-fenced in a new 'Just Transition Fund' to help workers who face the risk of unemployment as we move away from polluting energy sources.
11. The Oireachtas should pass the Fossil Fuel Divestment Bill to divest the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund from fossil fuels as soon as possible, given the moral and practical imperative to ensure the majority of remaining fossil fuels remain unburned.
12. Encourage and support a transition to a more-plant based diet for the sake both of our health and of the climate.
13. Support farmers to gradually transition away from intensive meat and dairy production, which is harming the climate and local environment, to an economically and environmentally sustainable model of farming by incentivising low-carbon farming and high value nature farming.
14. End all new oil and gas exploration in Irish waters. (Searching for new fossil fuel reserves to burn is incompatible with any serious attempt to meet the Paris Agreement temperature targets.)

D) Steps that would improve climate policy and action in future

15. Commit Ireland to doing our fair share to meet the temperature goals of the Paris Agreement and update Ireland's national policy to reflect this.
16. Push the EU to revise and strengthen its targets in light of the Paris Agreement, in line with science and equity.

is no payment for solar power at all, you have to give any surplus you generate away for free to the ESB.

7. Decide now that from 2020 all new buildings built in Ireland will produce minimal carbon pollution through energy efficiency measures.

8. Seek to restore Ireland's peatlands as a means of emissions reduction and carbon storage and to assist in important biodiversity protection and flood protection.

9. The Government should make regular contributions to the UN Green Climate Fund that are in line with Ireland's responsibility for climate change in order to support developing countries to adapt to climate change and contribute to the global effort. (The Government's current contribution of E2million is over 30 times lower than the EU average).

17. Adopt 5-year climate action plans that contain specific 5-year emissions reduction targets in line with the Government's 2050 transition objective. Each plan should be debated and voted on by the Dáil. (The Government's National Mitigation Plan released in July 2017 does not include any specific reduction commitment for the five-year period it covers.)

18. Ensure decisions taken on major national planning processes, such as the Capital Review and the National Planning Framework, align with Ireland's emission reduction commitments