

ENERGY SECRETARY ED MILLIBAND SAYS 2009 IS CRUNCH YEAR FOR CLIMATE CHANGE



Energy and climate change secretary Ed Miliband said 2008 was an historic year for confronting the twin challenges of developing a low-carbon economy and combating climate change, thanks to the agreement on European energy and emission targets, the passing of the world-first Climate Change Act, and strong growth in the UK renewable industry.

But he said 2009 will be crucial when it comes to meaningful action on climate change.

"We have seen significant progress during 2008 in our goals of developing secure, affordable and clean energy, and tackling the threat of global warming," said Milliband in January.

"In 2009, the world will meet again to agree a new international deal on climate change, while in the UK we will be laying out the groundwork for long-term energy efficiency improvements and carbon reduction measures. "However 2009 will be a crucial year when it comes to negotiating a meaningful, binding climate change deal in Copenhagen. There is still much to be done, but I'm confident we can achieve a global deal."

Milliband also set out his "top ten" achievements for the new Department for Energy and Climate Change this year:

1. Climate Change Act

The UK became the first country in the world to introduce a legally-binding framework to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Our target of reducing emissions by 80 per cent on 1990 levels by 2050 will be met through carbon budgets, the first of which will be set out by June next year. The passing of the Bill also saw the creation of the Climate Change Committee, an independent expert body which advises the government on setting carbon budgets and making carbon savings.

2. Energy and Planning Acts

Together these two Acts will help reduce carbon emissions, remove barriers to industry to invest in important new infrastructure, and offer incentives to householders and communities to use energy more efficiently and generate low-carbon heat and energy.

3. A European deal for 2020

The UK Government played a leading role in European negotiations towards a 2020 package, agreed in December. The agreement will see Europe cut emissions by 20%, increase energy efficiency by 20%, and source 20% of its energy from renewables - all by 2020. The EU's Emission Trading Scheme was strengthened with a tighter cap and greater levels of auctioning, putting a premium on low carbon technologies, while EU leaders agreed to use 300 million trading allowances to part-fund up to 12 Carbon Capture and Storage Demonstration plants.



4. World's first auction of carbon allowances

2008 saw the beginning of Phase II of the European Emission Trading Scheme. This scheme covers around 50 per cent of all UK emissions and sets a cap on emissions from large industrial companies including energy generators, chemical plants and cement manufacturers. Its aim is to help make carbon savings at least cost by allocating carbon allowances for each tonne of carbon. In November the UK strengthened this principle by becoming the first country in the world to sell carbon allowances through auction and providing real cash incentives to installations which cut their emissions.