

Response to campaign: Commit to helping the world's poorest access modern energy technology

The scale of the energy challenge in developing countries is huge: 1.1 billion people still have little or no access to electricity. While rapid progress is being made, an acceleration is required if the Sustainable Development Goal of universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services by 2030 to be achieved.

There are terrific advances happening in energy generation. The price of solar panels has been plummeting and continues to drop rapidly. For example, the Scaling Solar auction in Zambia recently achieved a price of around 6 US\$ cents per kWh for solar generation. Mini-grids and household solar are making an enormous difference to poor people's lives where there is little prospect of an affordable grid connection. The problem of intermittent renewable energy is increasingly being addressed, for example through advances in battery technology.

DFID acknowledges, however, the role that fossil fuels can play in the overall energy mix. We may support low-cost, gas-fired generation where renewable alternatives are not cost effective and there is strong and unmet demand. In relation to coal, the UK has a clear policy position to end public funding for both new and existing coal-fired power plants, which has been agreed with the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and other government departments. The UK Government will only consider proposals by multilateral development banks for financing coal-fired power plants in the world's poorest countries where it is clearly demonstrated that no other economically feasible alternative exists and there is a clear poverty reduction case.