

## **Foreign Policy Centre seminar**

**15 July 2009**

### **Introduction**

The success of London's bid for the 2012 Games was built on the promise of a lasting legacy for the people of the UK.

It is a promise that has raised the bar for future hosts of the Games.

From now on, those bidding for the Olympics will not simply be judged on their capacity to stage the world's greatest sporting spectacle. They will be judged on their ambition to bring about lasting benefits for local people, and to deliver long-term value for the country as a whole.

And as we prepare to make the permanent shift to a low carbon economy, it is more important than ever before to ensure that fostering a sustainable way of living is a powerful part of that ambition.

### **Building a low carbon Games**

That is why London 2012 will be the most sustainable Olympic and Paralympic Games of modern times.

All partners in the 2012 family are seizing on the Games as an unprecedented opportunity to drive forward progress on new technologies, low carbon materials, and innovative solutions to the environmental challenges we currently face.

London 2012 will mark the first time that an Olympics or similar scale event has calculated the carbon footprint across the entire project in order to minimise its environmental impact.

Already, in the construction phase, we have remediated one of the largest contaminated sites in the South East, and we are reclaiming more than 90% of the demolition materials for recycling or reuse.

We are also exceeding our target for transporting 50% of construction materials by road or by water – saving thousands of lorry journeys each year in the run-up to 2012.

### **A blueprint for sustainable living**

But, in targeting the highest standards in design, sustainability and construction, we are not simply building a sustainable Games. We are aiming to make the best possible investment for those who will live and work in the Olympic Park and Village after 2012.

75 pence in every pound spent is being invested in the regeneration of an area of East London that will provide the country with a blueprint for sustainable living.

The Athletes' Village alone will create more than 2,800 new homes which will be 44% more energy efficient than is standard, and which will use 20% less water than the London average.

Every neighbourhood will be served by cutting-edge renewable energy sources, world class public transport links, and more than 35 kilometres of cycleways and footpaths – not to mention a new 102 hectare park complete with wildlife habitats and wetland areas.

It is an environment that will be ideally suited to a low-carbon lifestyle.

And this is an important point, because a key part of our commitment for London 2012 was not only to put the *infrastructure* of sustainability in place, but to promote a *culture* of sustainability to match.

A long-term legacy of behavioural change that will drive progress towards environmental goals, but that will also help to foster communities that are more sustainable in social and economic terms:

- Closer and more cohesive;
- More open and inclusive;
- Citizens that are more active, engaged, and mutually supportive.



## **White Paper on Energy and Climate Change**

The role of London 2012 in bringing about this kind of change is all the more important because of the fact that the markets cannot and should not be expected to deliver it on their own.

Government must play its part, which is why we have today published our White Paper on Energy and Climate Change – the UK’s first ever comprehensive plan for how to manage the permanent transition to low carbon.

It is a plan that sets out how we will meet our target of a 34%<sup>1</sup> cut in emissions by 2020, by transforming our power sector, our homes and workplaces, our transport, our farming, and the way we manage our land and waste.

### **London 2012: a model for change**

The “city within a city” that London 2012 leaves behind will be at the forefront of this transition process; providing a model for the rest of the UK to follow.

But London 2012 will also set new standards for any city or country preparing to bid for or host a major sporting event – especially in the current economic climate.

Our emphasis has been on legacy value right from the start, but the downturn has now made it more important than ever to ensure that every single pound of our investment counts, and delivers a return for the people of East London and the UK.

And if this is the case for the fifth largest economy in the world, it is even more paramount for emerging economies such as India – preparing to host the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi – and South Africa – as hosts of the World Cup in the same year.

Their challenge is to seize the opportunity for change – building on the lessons of London 2012 and going even further to ensure that local people derive the greatest possible, long-term social, economic, and environmental benefits.

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<sup>1</sup> From 1990 levels

## **Conclusion**

But the onus is not only on the countries bidding to host sporting events. It is also on the bodies which award them.

Bodies such as the International Olympic Committee, which must act to ensure that the opportunity to host major global sporting events is available to all countries, and not just to the richest.

Because it is part of the debt we owe to developing countries to make sure that they are not prevented from reaping the rewards of hosting sporting events such as the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Events that are capable of leveraging tremendous economic and social change, and of bringing an entire nation together under the global spotlight.

This is what London 2012 is achieving for the UK.

Delivering rapid change that would not otherwise have been possible. Helping us to build closer communities, committed to a sustainable future.