Contacts
UK: Tamasin Cave, tamasin@upliftuk.org, 07973 424 015
International: Romain loualalen, romain@priceofoil.org, +33 659 104 231 (in Glasgow)

UK a climate laggard not a leader
due to its continued support for oil and gas
Countries going ‘beyond oil and gas’ power ahead in race to tackle climate crisis

GLASGOW: Ahead of the launch of a new diplomatic effort focused on keeping fossil fuels in the ground, campaigners are labelling the UK government a laggard in tackling the climate emergency compared to other countries that are powering past oil and gas.

The Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance, or BOGA, which is officially launched today by government representatives from Costa Rica and Denmark, brings together countries (and sub-national jurisdictions) that have committed to ending new licensing rounds for oil and gas exploration and production, and recognise that phasing out fossil fuel extraction is an urgent and crucial component of tackling the climate crisis.

Tessa Khan, director of Uplift said: “The creation of this Alliance shows how far behind the UK has fallen when it comes to genuine climate leadership. While our neighbours power past fossil fuels, Boris Johnson is contemplating approving new oil and gas projects, like the Cambo field.

“The UK is now a climate laggard, not a climate leader while it continues to allow new oil and gas exploration and production in the North Sea and wastes billions of pounds of public money propping up the fossil fuel industry. Right now, the Prime Minister seems to be more focused on putting out fires in his own party, rather than ensuring the UK pulls its weight in tackling the climate crisis.”

Rachel Kennerley, climate campaigner at Friends of the Earth, said: “There is no future in fossil fuels and all of our futures are in grave jeopardy if we keep burning them. As a country with huge historical responsibility for emissions, the UK clearly needs to end funding for a mega gas project in Mozambique, and pull the plug on the Cambo oil field, a new coal mine in Cumbria, and drilling for oil in Surrey.

“All countries have to let go of their fossil fuel addiction and the UK needs to lead the way. That crucial pathway to 1.5 gets a lot easier once coal, oil and gas are out of the picture.”

The launch of BOGA marks a major shift after decades of the UN climate process ignoring the crucial question of how the world will phase out the fossil fuels that are driving the cli-
mate crisis. It comes after the International Energy Agency and the UN Environment Programme have made it clear that continuing the expansion of global fossil fuel production is incompatible with keeping warming under a liveable 1.5°C, a key objective under the Paris Agreement.

The commitment made by these ‘first movers’ and regions is an essential first step towards a fair transition away from fossil fuel production. However, to stay within a liveable 1.5°C climate, countries must commit to ending all new oil and gas projects, including in already licensed areas, and wealthy countries like the UK must start reducing production at an accelerated pace as part of an equitable phase out of global fossil fuel production.

Notes
• BOGA website: https://beyondoilandgasalliance.com
• The International Energy Agency has said there can be no new oil and gas developments if we are to limit global temperature rise to within 1.5 degrees. The UN Secretary General has said that the latest report from the IPCC “must sound a death knell” for fossil fuels and that countries should “end all new fossil fuel exploration and production”.
  “Approving the Cambo oil field off Shetland would be flatly inconsistent with the science,” according to leading climate scientists.
• Cambo is a huge, new oil field off the west of Shetland, just a few hundred miles from Glasgow. Cambo’s owners, Shell and private-equity backed Siccar Point Energy, have applied to the UK government for permission to extract 170 million barrels of oil in the first phase alone, which would generate emissions equivalent to the annual carbon pollution from 18 coal-fired power stations. A summary of the Cambo Project, a decision on which is imminent, can be found on the BEIS website.