

Government, UN and business leaders gather for food and climate summit

1 year ago



Leaders from the UK Government, UN and businesses joined [Compass Group UK & Ireland](#) at a climate summit this week alongside the launch of the company's landmark Climate Transition Plan. The UK's largest food and support services firm hosted 400 delegates from over 100 global and UK-based companies for a candid discussion about the realities of transitioning to a low-carbon economy.

It comes as Compass UK & Ireland published an industry first transition plan, where it reported a -9.4% absolute reduction in emissions across Scope 1, 2, and 3 (FY19 baseline – FY23) inclusive of 20% business growth.

Keynote addresses assessed the domestic and global picture around climate transitioning, including economic opportunities and the realities of food systems change. Speeches were delivered by:

- Baroness Vere of Norbiton, Parliamentary Secretary at HM Treasury
- Myrto Arvantini, Head of Marketing and Communications at the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO)
- Saasha Celestial-One, Co-Founder and COO, Olio
- Professor Sir Charles Godfray, a leading academic on food and Compass UK&I external climate advisor.

The summit covered a wide range of topics crucial for an economy-wide net zero transition. This included food sector challenges such as food waste, supply chains and sustainable dieting, as well as the importance of cross-sector partnerships and accountability across the business community.

Climate experts from Green Alliance, Carbon Disclosure Project and Chantelle Nicholson, Green Michelin

Star chef, Apricity, discussed achieving an economy-wide transition in both policy and action in a panel chaired by Matt Scott, Co-Chair of the UK's Transition Plan Taskforce Disclosure Framework and Executive Director, UK Centre for Greening Finance & Investment. Panels chaired by Mike Barry, Sustainable Business Specialist, heard from a range of suppliers discussing solutions to decarbonising supply chains and a panel on health consisting of senior Compass executives, the NHS and data partner Foodsteps who analysed the work Compass is doing to make meals both sustainable and healthy. Finally, Compass brought together clients including AEG, The All England Lawn Tennis Club, Crown Commercial Services and former COP26 advisor Camilla Born to discuss partnerships between businesses, as well as with government.

Compass inaugural transition plan is the first to be published in its sector following the guidelines set by the [Transition Plan Taskforce Disclosure Framework](#) and the [Food & Beverage Sector Guidance](#). The Transition Plan included the largest food and drink carbon impact assessment to date, analysing over two million rows of data, which were externally verified.

Speaking at the event, Baroness Vere of Norbiton, Parliamentary Secretary, HM Treasury said: "I want you to think about where your business will be in 15-20 years and be as ambitious as you can with your climate commitments, especially considering what that will mean for your bottom line. Because others are and will. We want to ensure that the standards are in place so that businesses can deliver on the promises that we make to all our stakeholders, and the TPT Disclosure Framework is a strong basis for what that should look like. I hope that everyone publishes a detailed transition plan, and congratulations to Compass Group for taking a lead on this important matter."

Professor Sir Charles Godfray commented: "I am optimistic that we can feed the world, sustainably, healthily, and equitably. The last 50 years have seen significant progress in tackling hunger and malnutrition, though much still needs to be done including addressing the diseases of over-consumption. Looking ahead we can anticipate exciting technical progress that will help make food production more sustainable. I'm also optimistic that food is now part of the COP process and welcome the different initiatives (including TPT) that foreground climate and sustainability in private sector planning. I am proud to work with a company that is taking a leading role in thinking how we can change the food system for the better."

Matt Scott, Co-Chair of the UK's Transition Plan Taskforce Disclosure Framework and Executive Director, UK Centre for Greening Finance & Investment, said: "Transition plans are moving from niche to mainstream and becoming core to business strategy. By taking a strategic and rounded approach, aligned with the recommendations of the UK's Transition Plan Taskforce, Compass are leading the way. Many congratulations to the team - not only for taking such an impressive next step on their transition planning journey but also for inspiring action across the UK food sector through today's launch event - it's been a real pleasure and privilege to take part".

Robin Mills, CEO, Compass Group UK & Ireland concluded: "Transition plans are designed to support the businesses of the future. Our transition plan will help us navigate through future risks and opportunities we may face. It's been two years since we launched *Our Climate Promise*, and it feels like we're really in the thick of it now. As we have progressed, we have a better understanding of the carbon intensity of the food on our plate, and how we can support our clients in their own journeys. To operate in tomorrow's world successfully, we cannot compromise on quality. The sustainable solution has to become the best option."