



Plenary Talk title

The Global Politics of Climate Change

Mr. John Ashton, Special Representative for Climate Change, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office

In June 2006 John was appointed as the UK Foreign Secretary's Special Representative for Climate Change with the aim of supporting Ministers in delivering a step-change in the international response to climate change – a new strategic priority for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He has the personal title of Ambassador, reporting directly to the Foreign Secretary.

A co-founder and Chief Executive of E3G since 2004, Mr Ashton has been continuously active in climate diplomacy in various capacities since 1997. He helped negotiate the agreement in 2005 between the EU and China to demonstrate zero emission coal technology in China, and was closely involved in the EU's engagement with Russia over the Kyoto Protocol. Before that, while still in government, he was from 1998-2002 a senior member of the UK negotiating team in the UN climate negotiations.

Mr Ashton has spent most of his career in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He founded and led its Environment Policy Department, before moving outside government in 2002 in preparation for the establishment of E3G.

A major theme of Mr Ashton's career has been China. He speaks Chinese. He was an adviser to Governor Chris Patten in Hong Kong from 1993-7. His first diplomatic assignment, from 1981-4, was as Science Attache in the British Embassy in Beijing. He also has experience at high level on a wide range of European and global issues, including as a political officer in the British Embassy in Rome from 1988-93.

John is married, with one son. He relaxes by playing cricket.