EMILY MAITLIS:
Now that deal from Paris when it finally came was beyond the eleventh hour - the host nation, France, extending the summit by a whole extra day to overcome stubborn divisions and thus negotiators were forced to work till darkness fell yesterday to bring nearly 200 countries in one deal. The accord promises to steer the global economy away from fossil fuel and slow down the rate at which the earth is warming, but how legally binding will it be and how fast will the world move on what are currently just promises? Joining me from Paris, the Energy and Climate Change Secretary Amber Rudd who’s been representing the British government in those talks. Very nice of you to join us this morning, Amber Rudd. It’s a big moment, this – nearly 200 countries signing up – but I guess you could say the real work only just begins now?

AMBER RUDD:
Well, I think that’s absolutely right. It was an extraordinary achievement and during the week it didn’t always look like it was going to be possible. It really went down to
the wire with the final plenary meeting suspended for an hour while final negotiations took place and then we got it. But it’s absolutely right, it’s only the start. I mean the French did a fantastic job managing the whole process, but – as they said themselves – it’s a step in the right direction. It’s a new road we’re going on, but the work begins now.

**EMILY MAITLIS:**
For anyone looking for hard, binding phrases, when you hear about “an aim towards” or “as soon as possible”, this is an aspiration, isn’t it? It’s an aspiration to limit change to 1.5 degrees, but in terms of the real promises people can make we’re looking at an increase probably of closer to 2.5 or 3.

**AMBER RUDD:**
Well you’re right in that the current contributions that all the countries are making actually takes us to 2.7. So we need to do better than that and what this did is set us on a pathway to try and achieve that. It is ambitious but it’s also legally binding in some ways and not in other ways. But we had to get the balance. We had to get the balance of being totally inclusive - getting 200 countries to sign up - but also not having such a tough compliance regime, which you could say we’d had at Kyoto which didn’t succeed, that some countries would step away. And I think this is the right balance, but it is a compromise. It is, nevertheless, a historic moment.

**EMILY MAITLIS:**
And what will be concerning many people when they look at this is they want to believe this will now be enacted and yet this is dependent on 5 year assessments. We know that the monitoring, the reporting that each country must do about itself is binding, but enacting that target is not legally binding, it can’t be. Will anything happen if they fail?

**AMBER RUDD:**
It will … No, there is no tough compliance in that way. What we do have is the political will. So you’re absolutely right – we have the 5 year reviews. That’s not a negligible thing. Each country has to come forward, that is compulsory, and that was a big win in terms of what we got from the review of the documents.
EMILY MAITLIS:
(over) But there will be no implications of failure? Nothing will happen as a result of that?

AMBER RUDD:
But what do you want – some sort of gunboat diplomacy? What we’ve got is the political will here. The countries have agreed to do this, they have to come forward with the proposals. And what you saw at the conference over the past few weeks was the support from civil society, from NGOs, and critically from businesses who are going to help to pay for this.

EMILY MAITLIS:
Okay.

AMBER RUDD:
It’s not a perfect deal, but we mustn’t make the perfect the enemy of the good.

EMILY MAITLIS:
Let’s talk about Britain and how seriously we can take all this in terms of our policy. Since the election 2015, which policies can you hold up and say these will cut emissions?

AMBER RUDD:
We’re the first developed country to put an end date on coal. I received a lot of congratulations for that from people at this conference. We’re going to expand our offshore wind provision. We’re absolutely committed to this deal and to making sure we deliver on it, but we’re going to do it in a different way which is providing better value for money for consumers. Driving down prices is a critical, essential part of making sure that we can deliver on all these commitments. We have to make them cheaper …

EMILY MAITLIS:
(over) And yet …

**AMBER RUDD:**
(over) … and I’m going to be holding the industry accountable for that.

**EMILY MAITLIS:**
You’ve put an end date on coal, but it does seem a funny time to be cancelling subsidies on renewable energy. And when you look at what has been introduced – a block on solar in rural areas, a cut on industrial solar subsidies, a cut in the biomass subsidy, a scrapping of the Green Deal, a carbon tax on solar which most people would grapple to get their heads round, an increase on tax on small cars – you can’t genuinely say that those are all measures and policies now that will help people move towards renewables.

**AMBER RUDD:**
But I do say that. I say it because it’s about delivering value for money for people. There’s no point having renewables which are permanently expensive. Subsidies isn’t a long-term plan for renewables.

**EMILY MAITLIS:**
(over) That’s a choice though. Value for money is not the same as a policy to cut emissions. When the chancellor has come to you and said “I’m introducing all these measures” – which we assume is where it’s come from – does he ever ask about what the impact will be on emissions?

**AMBER RUDD:**
Well I don’t agree with that. What we have to do is cut emissions and give value for money. You don’t need to separate them. The fact is we can grow our economy and deliver a lower carbon future and we’re going to be focusing on making sure that we do that. We don’t have to do it one or the other. We have to make sure that we do both.

**EMILY MAITLIS:**
It doesn’t worry you then when you have the UN chief environmental scientist Jacqui
McGlade saying that the UK is shifting away from clean energy as the rest of the world’s rushing towards it? She says “It’s a serious signal and a perverse signal that Britain is doing this now.”

**AMBER RUDD:**
Well I completely disagree with that and in fact the evidence since then, in terms of taking off coal and making other statements, I hope would bring her back on side. We’ve now made a clear policy about how we’re going to deliver on our carbon budgets and stick to the Climate Change Act. I think we have a strong, clear story on energy and a low carbon future.

**EMILY MAITLIS:**
The impression that’s been created is that since the Lib Dems went away, you’ve been out to please the backbenchers more; that actually, you know, this has all been a sense that climate change is a bit soft or a little bit of a waste of money for many on your own side who think once the Lib Dems have gone, we can broadly do what we want.

**AMBER RUDD:**
Well I just don’t think that reflects the actuality. I mean there are people who are soft on this subject, but let’s be frank – they come from all round the political spectrum …

**EMILY MAITLIS:**
(over) But just explain …

**AMBER RUDD:**
(over) But there is a global consensus on this now.

**EMILY MAITLIS:**
(over) … why would you put … why would you put a carbon tax then on solar? What is the logic on taxing something that you’d like to move people towards?

**AMBER RUDD:**
No what this was in fact is the climate change exemption levy. Renewables now don’t get that exemption and the main reason for that is because a third of that money was
going overseas and that is the wrong thing to do with taxpayers’ money. So they no longer have the exemption.

**EMILY MAITLIS:**
So everyone else, everyone else suffers as a result of that if they want to move towards that?

**AMBER RUDD:**
Well I don’t think they do suffer as a result of it. I mean the costs of solar have come down over the past 15 years by 80 per cent and we have to make sure that the subsidy reflects that. I am going to be absolutely clear about this: if the costs come down, then the subsidy comes down. It is the right thing to do.

**EMILY MAITLIS:**
15 per cent of all energy from renewable sources by 2020, that was the target you set for the government. Do you accept that we’re not going to hit that target now, it’s just not going to happen?

**AMBER RUDD:**
I don’t accept it. What I do accept is that it’s a difficult target and we need to take more measures in order to achieve it in heat and in transport. On electricity, we have a very good story to tell, which is we expect to have 30 per cent of our electricity …

**EMILY MAITLIS:**
Yeah.

**AMBER RUDD:**
… from renewable energy by 2020, which exceeds it. There is more to do though.

**EMILY MAITLIS:**
*(over)* You wrote to colleagues, didn’t you? That was a draft that was seen …

**AMBER RUDD:**
Indeed.
EMILY MAITLIS:
… saying that you wouldn’t hit that target.

AMBER RUDD:
Unless we took action across government, which is exactly what we’re going to be doing.

EMILY MAITLIS:
Let’s just have a quick word before we go on flooding in Cumbria. Many people, thousands of people suffering from that, and we heard not just from yourself but Liz Truss the acceptance now this is caused by climate change, isn’t it?

AMBER RUDD:
Well there are trends which are the impacted … which… There are trends which occur which are caused by climate change of severe weather events. I wouldn’t pin individual storms to those, but I would say that addressing dangerous climate change is about security for people and making sure that for the long-term future they’re not impacted by really dangerous weather events.

EMILY MAITLIS:
And does that make you think twice when you see individuals who are now facing really tough insurance premiums shooting through the roof? If you accept that this is part of something that everyone is responsible for, should more help and more work go towards them?

AMBER RUDD:
Well we are doing that. We are helping with more flood defences. We have plans over this parliament to put more money into flood defences and to protect another 300,000 people from dangerous flooding. So we take local flooding and local dangerous storms like this very seriously.

EMILY MAITLIS:
Amber Rudd, thank you very much for joining us. Thank you.
AMBER RUDD:
Thank you.

INTERVIEW ENDS