

## **A Plain Tale of Home: Helping Balance Climate Change Policy?**

The economist Professor Nick Stern stated, in 2006“ we are the first generation that, through neglect, could destroy the relationship between humans and the planet; and perhaps the last generation that can prevent dangerous climate change.” It was necessary to act with urgency. The public is in tune with that emergency. A recent Ipsos poll conducted in 14 countries found that two-thirds of citizens everywhere consider the climate crisis is as serious as COVID-19, and want their governments to prioritize climate action in economic recovery. But how is this to be done since Pro-Earth recovery will need to balance immediate relief with long-term programmes costing trillions? The design of far-reaching and very complex measures will need input from across society if measures are to satisfy demands and also be capable of implementation. Citizens' assemblies, which form representative samples of a country's population, can be valuable arenas for policy debate and allow public aspirations to be better heard and acted upon by governments.

The recent contribution of the French Citizens' Convention on Climate Change to France's recovery plan shows how public deliberation can strengthen countries' efforts to build back better. They started working in October 2019 to propose measures that could cut national greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030 "in a spirit of social justice.

Can a climate citizens' assembly in the United Kingdom also heal our own politics? The Climate Assembly UK was set up by six House of Commons select committees and published its final report on September 10th. It was made up of 108 people from all walks of life, with four experts guiding their decision-making. The chair of the House of Commons' Select Committee leading the initiative has stated that the range of voices within the Assembly reflects our population, has arrived at clear recommendations, and has shown respect for contrasted perspectives despite disagreement. Key recommendations include:

a frequent flyer tax for those who fly farthest and most often; an early shift to electric vehicles; making wind and solar energy key to energy production; and using education to change diets and reduce meat and dairy consumption by between 20 and 40 per cent.