



Bernard Looney at the World Gas Conference

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28 June 2018



Thank you and good morning everyone.

It's good to see so many people here because I think this session is one of the most important of the conference – maybe the most important.

In this room – in this conference centre – we all know the value of gas.

We all know its virtues – Bob (Perciasepe) has just reminded us.

Not everyone outside of this venue is of the same mind though.

There is a significant constituency around the world that believes gas is part of the past, not the future – part of the problem, not the solution.

That's an issue because the low carbon transition we are on is tough enough already.

By 2040 the world will need around a third more energy than it does today – but it also needs emissions from that energy to come down by around half.

That's a tough challenge – a dual challenge:

- A third more energy,
- Half the emissions.

That's why gas is so important.

To meet that challenge in any realistic, pragmatic way you need more gas in the fuel mix.

I'm sure we all know that, but not everyone agrees.

The opposing argument goes like this: natural gas is a hydrocarbon. It is also mainly methane and methane in the atmosphere is a potent greenhouse gas – much more potent than CO₂.

That's an oversimplification — it also misses what I believe is the big point.

Because it doesn't take account of how gas – used in place of coal in power – has massively brought emissions down here in the US, and even more dramatically in the UK.

There's a paper recently published in the highly respected journal, Nature.

It reports the impact that switching to gas has had on power generation in the UK.

Gas is the main reason carbon intensity in the sector has come down by 47% in five years.

So there is much more to the argument than methane. But we have to address the methane issue.

We have to make our case – the case for gas – really simple and compelling.

If we're going to keep the lights on, if the world is going to keep moving, if billions of people in poverty or on low incomes are going to get a better quality of life.

Then the argument for gas needs to be won.

That is why methane is such an important issue.

Every methane molecule we can keep in the pipe, helps keep atmospheric concentrations down (and helps to reinforce the argument for natural gas).

Incidentally, every molecule that stays in the pipe is also a molecule you can sell.

So containing methane is good for business as well as good for the environment.

We are really focused on the issue in BP – working inside the business and working in collaboration with others across the industry.

We are one of the 10 companies in the Oil and Gas Climate Initiative, which is prioritising methane.

And we are signatories to the Methane Guiding Principles drawn up by a coalition of producers, international gas bodies, NGOs and academics – developing best practices on methane emissions reduction.

In our own operations, we are upgrading our facilities and our techniques to minimise methane emissions.

Just to give you some examples of that, here in the US:

- We used to have around 10,000 high-bleed pneumatic controllers across 5 million acres of our onshore gas business, from Texas to the Rockies.
- We have had a major programme running to upgrade them and we are down to the last 145.

Our ground operations are being scanned by methane-detecting cameras we have got drones in the air pinpointing leaks and we are looking at methane measurement from space using satellites.

We are also looking at how we design out methane emissions in new projects.

In Oman, we built a single central processing facility out in the desert, removing the need for processing equipment on hundreds of individual wells.

In Azerbaijan we are piloting new technology for monitoring methane at our newly extended Sangachal facility – part of the giant Shah Deniz 2 project.

Two months ago frontline leaders in our Upstream business gathered for a workshop, bringing together our in-house methane experts and experts from Princeton University, where some of the world's leading research is done.

We identified a list of nearly a hundred actions we can take – in addition to the all the activity underway already.

All those actions together are designed to keep our global methane intensity at 0.2%, which is where it is today.

That 0.2% figure is really significant.

It's been described as stringent by the Environmental Defense Fund and incredibly rigorous by Professor Steve Pacala, a leading climate scientist at Princeton. The Nature Conservancy also say it's a good step.

For me, it is a key plank in winning the argument for gas.

And if we win the argument, gas has the big future it deserves, not just the transition fuel for a lower carbon world, but as a destination fuel for many, many decades to come.