**Grasping the rose and not the thorns: the place of technology in a sustainable low carbon transition**

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Recent global political commitments on avoiding dangerous climate change have set the world on the brink of the most significant change in the development path since the industrial revolution. Energy and technology lie at the heart of both the challenges and opportunities that these new pathways present. But a low carbon transition is not just about ‘climate policy’ and technology is only part of the solution. The discussions about the significant reduction in emissions required have continually flagged that the future low carbon transition is more than technology and requires sustainable development pathways to be pursued. Nevertheless, attempts at emissions reduction continue to focus on technological measures, risking lock-in to higher emissions trajectories in all countries and future difficulties in meeting climate goals. This is of particular concern with the less industrialised countries which have yet to develop much of their infrastructure. Technology is central to the pursuit of the low carbon transition but it is a supporting actor in the pursuit of sustainable development. It is through sustainable development pathways that technology can be placed in its appropriate context, allowing win-win outcomes to emerge and tradeoffs to be managed. Technology can therefore become a tool that serves transition as part of a wider development focus in how we approach mitigating emissions. Grasping the rose and not the thorns is an outcome that is within reach. But it will require informed decision-making and cooperation to reap the full benefits of technology across society, public policy and the private sector that the coming systemic change now offers.

