

**.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman**

**For Immediate Release
15, 2010
2010/457**

April

REMARKS

**Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton
At the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA) Ministerial**

**April 15, 2010
Inter-American Development Bank
Washington, D.C.**

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, thank you very much, Luis Alberto, and to everyone here at IDB. Thank you for hosting this important gathering. And I am delighted to see so many friends in the audience representing not only the important work that we talk about today, but the partnership across our hemisphere. And I know that Secretary Chu spoke with you this morning and someone's already told me that he was the funniest physicist you've ever heard from. (Laughter.) And I have to agree, probably the funniest Nobel Prize Laureate as well.

But I think that his presence this morning, mine here today, really gives you, I hope, the strong message as to how committed the Obama Administration and I personally am, as well as Secretary Chu, to this initiative. And I want to thank Secretary General Insulza and OAS for their cooperation and participation on so many fronts, because we feel that we are at a point of such great promise here in the hemisphere. Energy innovation is happening all over. We see it. But it is not yet at the scale that it needs to be.

Millions of people in Brazil traveled to work and school today in vehicles fueled by ethanol. In Costa Rica, a country working to become the world's first carbon-neutral country, shops, households, hospitals are running on electricity generated from renewable sources. In Mexico, a cement corporation is powered by Latin America's largest wind farm. In Chile, the construction of a solar farm is underway in the desert. And a clean energy technology network is being developed across the region, linking centers in Peru, El Salvador, Chile, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Brazil. And Trinidad and Tobago have announced that they will also build a center.

So this is happening in our hemisphere. Governments and businesses are investing in new technologies and new sources of energy. And these efforts do have global significance. But we have to use our own creativity and our commitment to bring these efforts to scale. We need sustainable and, yes, profitable solutions that bring more and more dollars into the marketplace. And we have a chance to do that – to create not only progress on energy innovation that will save people money, that will use indigenous sources of energy, but which will also help us fight climate change.

I believe that this is part of the overall strategy to combat poverty, and to do so in a way that is inclusive. We know that in our hemisphere, there is an income gap that has held back millions of people who have the talent, the desire, and yes, the work ethic to lift themselves up, to improve their lot, and to give their families, particularly their children, a different future. But they have lacked the opportunity. I believe that talent is universal, but opportunity is not. And it is our job to try to equal that equation.

We can open doors to those who live in remote regions off the grid or in cities growing too quickly for power companies to meet rising demand. And we have too many people in our hemisphere who spend too many hours in time-consuming tasks because they lack the technologies, including the most basic, namely electricity. We can create jobs for a growing population of young people throughout our hemisphere determined to seize their chance to make a better life. And by decreasing our reliance on fossil fuels, governments, particularly in the Caribbean, that now depend on imported oil can spend that money on social and economic development while decreasing their carbon emissions and protecting the natural environment that is one of the real treasures of our hemisphere.

This is not only an opportunity; this is a responsibility, and not just to ourselves and to each other, but to future generations. A year ago, President Obama proposed this partnership as a forum for sharing ideas and devising solutions. And through consultation with many of the countries here today, we identified five critical areas of engagement: energy efficiency, renewable energy, cleaner fossil fuels, energy poverty, and infrastructure. And today, I propose we add two new areas to help advance the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and to be prepared for the next conference in Cancun. Those are: sustainable forestry and land use, and adaptation to assist developing countries that have been and are being hardest hit by climate change.

Now, many countries represented here already collaborate on energy and climate policy. The Major Economies Forum includes Mexico, Brazil, Canada, and the United States. The Latin American Energy Organization, OLADE, brings together 26 nations to help meet its member nations' energy needs. The countries of Central America have already made progress toward integrating their national electricity grids and creating a regional power market through SICA. And we have bilateral energy agreements already that crisscross our region.

But the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas is different and fills a critical niche. As one of my staff put it, it's a little like Facebook; anyone can start an initiative and invite others to join, and countries can be part of as many initiatives as they choose. Or as one diplomat from the region said each of us is like a ship at sea, and though we may follow slightly different courses, we're all making similar voyages and we can help each other on our journeys.

So the goal of this partnership is not to impose requirements or regulations but to create a forum and framework to share best practices, cultivate new collaborations, promote indigenous solutions, deepen regional ties, and foster local and national leadership. This

is a mission not only for governments but for the private sector and civil society as well. And I'm so pleased that this gathering includes representatives from each.

Now, several nations have already taken the lead on key issues. I heard you had a very lively discussion earlier today that I am happy to hear about, because if it's not lively, it means we're not paying attention.

Canada is a leading heavy oil and unconventional fuels initiative designer, and what it's trying to do is to improve extraction practices and promote responsible land management. As it learns, particularly from gas produced from shale, it will share those practices with the rest of us.

Colombia, the host of the next Summit of the Americas in 2012, is spearheading an initiative to help build and eventually link the infrastructure for long distance electrical transmission from Panama through the Andean states to Chile. Integrating these electrical grids will decrease energy losses, improve efficiency, and provide a powerful example of regional cooperation.

Mexico is taking steps to turn its wind energy center in Oaxaca into a regional center so governments interested in wind technology can study its model. And I appreciate Mexico's continuing efforts to help Central American and Caribbean countries practice greater energy efficiency.

Brazil, which is building two million energy-efficient homes over the next four years, has launched a project called Building with Energy Efficiency and Sustainability. It focuses on green construction, especially in urban areas. Latin America is one of the world's most urbanized regions. Eighty percent of the people live in cities, so Brazil's initiative is a terrific example of how good ideas can and should spread across borders. And Brazil is building upon urban development projects in Chile, Colombia, and New Orleans. Several countries have joined the Brazilian initiative: Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Mexico, and yes, the United States. And as a partner to this Brazilian initiative, the United States announced at the World Urban Forum in Rio last month that we will convene planners, developers, and architects to create a network of experts to spread learning, especially through university exchanges.

Now, these first-wave initiatives are exactly the kind of cross-cutting collaborations we hoped this partnership would produce. They're pragmatic and they reflect the diversity of the hemisphere. And we urge other nations to join and to create your own initiatives. For our part, we believe the United States has a lot to learn, so we come to this partnership with deep respect for the leadership already being shown in the development of clean fuels and the adoption of sustainable technologies. We know we have some catching up to do, and we're committed to doing just that. So today, I'm delighted to announce six energy and climate initiatives that the United States will launch through this partnership.

First, we will work to advance sustainable energy in the Caribbean. As I said, this is the area of the world most dependent on imported fossil fuels and suffering from the world's highest electricity rates. That's shameful in our hemisphere, and it shouldn't be. The people of the Caribbean are creative, resilient; they're able to lead the way in new forms of energy, and we want to be a partner. The United States will provide a grant to the Organization of American States to lend technical and legal expertise to any Caribbean country seeking to help get clean energy projects off the ground. We are committed to helping you with energy security. We think clean energy and energy security go hand in hand.

Yesterday, the OAS, the Caribbean energy ministers, CARICOM, the World Bank, the IDB, and officials from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands launched a dialogue to explore the possibility of installing undersea electric cables in the region to give the Caribbean access to new power supplies. Another exciting possibility would link Puerto Rico with the U.S. Virgin Islands and a third would link the islands of Nevis and St. Kitts.

So we have a lot we can do and we have to get started. Imagine a future in which instead of waiting for those oil tankers to come and dock, Caribbean nations are supplying each other with energy, whether it's geothermal power from Dominica or gas from Trinidad.

Second, we will support energy and environmental security in Central America. Now, like the Caribbean, Central America has the potential to develop your own renewable energy, but it, too, remains dependent on imported fossil fuels. Countries like Honduras are already working to increase their power supply through renewable sources of energy. And the United States is ready to help the governments of Central America fulfill their goal of integrating their power infrastructures. Mexico and Colombia already support this effort.

Now, integration is a considerable undertaking, one that demands technical, legal, and policy reforms. But the countries of Central America have nearly 20 years of experience to build on and share with other nations. And I know that representatives from SICA met with Caribbean ministers at the OAS yesterday.

There will need to be some legal changes in the Caribbean and Central America, and there will need to be real leadership and political will to stand up against those who profit from imported oil. I've had discussions with some of the countries in the Caribbean and Central America. I know there are powerful political interests that dominate your imported oil markets that are very hard to take on. But you are begging your countries if you do not take them on and pass new laws that will create a new energy future and free up money that can be invested in health and education and raising the incomes of your people.

Third, we will work to advance sustainable biomass energy. In countries like Brazil, biomass in the form of crushed sugar cane stalks is used to power ethanol distilleries. We're looking to promote the sustainable production and use of biomass. This effort will

be led jointly by the State Department and the Department of Agriculture, and we invite other countries to participate with us.

Fourth, the United States will work through the Peace Corps to advance renewable energy efforts. More than 2,000 Peace Corps volunteers serve in this hemisphere. From now on, many of them will be trained in renewable energy and energy efficiency and will share their training with communities and help implement those practices. They'll work with microfinance institutions and small businesses to provide financing for renewable energy projects so people can power their homes and towns without relying exclusively on generators fueled by oil or open cooking fires.

Cooking fires are one of the biggest sources of carbon across the world. They also produce the problems of all kinds of bad health, especially for children. The issue that we have to confront is how cooking fires are bad for the environment and they're bad for your health. And there are low-cost solutions – some very advanced cooking stoves that are cost-effective and can eliminate many of those issues. The U.S. Government is working with private sector companies and NGOs to encourage the development of low-cost, more efficient, affordable cook stoves.

Fifth, the United States has named three of our top scientists to serve as ECPA fellows, and they will be available to any of you as consultants and advisors or educators. Our first is Dr. Daniel Kammen, a professor of energy at the University of California at Berkeley, who also serves as the founding director of the Renewable and Appropriate Energy Laboratory, the co-director of the Berkeley Institute of the Environment, and the director of the Transportation Sustainability Research Center. He's a very busy person. (Laughter.) And he was the coordinating lead author for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007.

Now, Dr. Kammen is here and I was going to ask him to stand but the lights went back on. Dr. Kammen, there you are. Thank you so much, Dr. Kammen. (Applause.)

Our second fellow is Dr. Ruth DeFries, a professor of sustainable development at Columbia University, whose research explores the consequences of human behavior on climate, biodiversity, habitats, and ecosystems. She's also an expert on tropical deforestation and its impact on carbon emissions. So please take advantage of Dr. DeFries.

And third is Dr. Gerry Galloway, an engineering professor at the University of Maryland, whose focus is on the management of water resources and the impact of climate change on water systems. Each of these scientists are leaders in energy and climate, and their research and advocacy will give you an extra added benefit if you take advantage of them. And I urge every country to nominate your own science fellows to facilitate greater learning and discovery.

Sixth, the United States will promote the use of shale gas. Now, I know that in some places is controversial. But natural gas is the cleanest fossil fuel available for power

generation today, and a number of countries in the Americas may have shale gas resources. If developed, shale gas could make an important contribution to our region's energy supply, just as it does now for the United States. And the geologists at the U.S. Geological Survey are ready to work with partners to explore this potential. And we want to do it in a way that is as environmentally respectful as possible. So there are some best practices that we would be more than willing to share, and as countries develop the legislation or regulation necessary for this industry, to make sure it gets off on the best foot.

Now, we hope that we'll have a lot of positive results from these initiatives and all the others that are taking place, and I look forward to future meetings where we share the progress that we each have been making. But as Luis Alberto said, I was last on this stage to talk about Haiti, and that was before the earthquake, so let me just mention a word about our friend and neighbor, Haiti. Today, fewer than 30 percent of Haitians have access to electricity. There is no greater energy crisis in our hemisphere than the one happening right now in Haiti. So as we work with the Haitian people to help rebuild their nation, we must focus on increasing their energy supply. And I want to thank Venezuela, who is represented here, for the support that you have given to Haiti in supplying energy to the people of Haiti.

The conversation we're taking – that we're having right here today echoes conversations that are happening all over the world. We know we're spending too much money on energy. We know we're not using the best forms of energy. We know we can create jobs with clean energy and energy efficiency. We just haven't made the commitment and marshaled our resources to put us on that path.

Now, I've made six trips to Latin America during the past 15 months and I was fortunate to make many visits before that, so I know that our hemisphere can be the leader. I know that we can do things that no one else is doing and we can do better what others have already begun. The creativity, the talent, the persistence, the hard work of the people of the Americas is unmatched. I remember being at a state-of-the-art biogas plant in Mexico, and the municipal officials and the utility and the private investors and the government of Mexico were so proud of that. Now, it's not going to get headlines. Maybe they got a little bit of press coverage because I showed up. But it is the future and it is that kind of day-by-day commitment that is going to make the difference.

I've been to Chile and Haiti and talked with the people who were putting their lives back together after the earthquake. Well, as terrible as those tragedies were, they were also opportunities, and shame on us if we don't move to take advantage of them.

I've met with families in El Salvador who are finally getting electricity because of solar panels as part of a Millennium Challenge Corporation program that is making all the difference to them and how they live. And I've met with women entrepreneurs in Costa Rica who are driving economic growth and understanding the importance at the same time of doing their part to combat climate change.

I was recently at Brazil's only Afro-Brazilian university, and I was amazed at how many questions I got about energy and about renewable energy. You talk to young people, like those who actually use Facebook instead of just talking about it like I do – (laughter); they get it. They're just waiting for us to get out of the way and to create the opportunities for them to have this clean energy, because they know they're going to live with the consequences of the decisions that we make today.

So the fundamental purpose of this partnership is to promote sustainable growth that benefits all of our citizens. I started at the beginning by mentioning the large income gap that for too long has stalked our hemisphere. It is the most important challenge we face as fellow Americans. What do we do to make sure that we create rising incomes, improving standards of living for the people from the Arctic to the very tip of South America? Energy is one of the keys that will unlock what has been a consistent challenge over so many decades. We cannot lose this opportunity.

So I thank you for everything you are doing, and even more I thank you and challenge you for what you will do in the future. And I want you to know that the United States, under President Obama, stands ready to help in any way we can. We want to see growth that is sustainable. We want to see rising incomes. We want to see better lives. And we want to see the gap between talent and opportunity begin to narrow for the sake of us all. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

#