Organization of American States

ECPA Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas

IV Public Discussion Forum

Impact of Expanded Natural Gas Resources on the Energy Future of the Americas

Organization of American States
1889 F Street, NW • Washington, DC 20006
Padilha Vidal Room (Terrace Level)

Wednesday, July 30, 2014

Background

The OAS Department of Sustainable Development, in its capacity as Clearinghouse of the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA), is hosting its fourth energy and climate public discussion forum. The objective is to foster meaningful debates on the seven pillars of ECPA. The IV forum will assess the impact of expanded natural gas resources in the energy future of the Americas.

Natural gas is a strategic resource with considerable potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from energy generation. It releases less than half the CO_2 emissions of coal as well as fewer pollutants into the atmosphere. Furthermore, methane, the main pollutant associated with natural gas, only remains in the atmosphere for several months, as opposed to CO_2 which takes several hundred years to be transformed. For these reasons natural gas is viewed as a bridge fuel to a carbon-zero economy. Several countries in the Americas boast abundant conventional and unconventional natural gas reserves. Historically, conventional gas has been the focus of most of the energy industry's exploration. However, most of the growth in supply in recent years is derived from unconventional formations such as tight gas, coal bed methane, gas hydrates, and shale gas. Technological breakthroughs have made these supplies commercially viable.

The OAS seeks to contribute to shaping policies that promote a transition to low-carbon economies and encourage sustainable development. The forum will promote understanding and foster provocative exchanges on topics relating to natural gas.

Permanent Missions and other guests will be encouraged to engage in an open debate with specialists and Clearinghouse staff about the future of gas in the region's geopolitical context. Further, the audience will learn about how these resources are reshaping the Americas' energy mix.

The forum will follow the Davos-style format. Panellists will share their knowledge and ideas on four main topics.

1. Natural gas and LNG: a transition toward low-carbon energy sources
2. Trans boundary pipelines and other interconnections
3. Integration and governance: fundamental components for energy diversification and climate change mitigation
4. Natural gas, LNG and hydropower: balanced energy mix in electricity generation.

Guests are encouraged to ask questions and interact with speakers and other meeting participants.

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Agenda

1:45pm - 2:00pm	Participant registration
2:00pm - 2:30pm	***Welcome remarks and introduction: The Importance of Cleaner and More Efficient Use of Fossil Fuels in the Americas*** **Cletus I. Springer** Director, Department of Sustainable Development **H.E. Nestor Mendez** Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Belize before the Organization of American States and the Government of the United States
2:30pm - 4:00pm	***Future of Gas and LNG in the Geopolitical and Economic Context of Latin America the Caribbean*** Moderator: **Juan Cruz Monticelli** Senior Energy Specialist, Department of Sustainable Development *The panelists will debate over the following topics:* · *Natural gas and LNG: a transition toward low-carbon energy sources* - **Bill Becker,** Clean Energy Policy Expert, Clean Energy Solutions Center · *Trans boundary pipelines and other interconnections* **– Ramon Espinasa,** Lead Oil and Gas Specialist, Energy Division, Inter-American Development Bank · *Integration and governance: fundamental components for energy diversification and climate change mitigation* **Francisco E. González, Ph.D.,** Senior Associate Professor, Latin American Studies Energy, Resources and Environment, Johns Hopkins · *Natural gas, LNG and hydropower: balanced energy mix in electricity generation* **- Lisa Viscidi,** Director, Energy Program, The Inter-American Dialogue
4:00pm - 4:45pm	***Open Discussion Session***
4:45pm - 5:30pm	***Networking Reception***