

**White House Special Envoy Stern's Remarks to the
Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas
Ministerial**

April 16, 2010

Organization of American States

- Good afternoon. I am delighted to be here today, and I thank you for all being here in Washington DC.
- Your agenda for the past day and a half has been impressive, with its focus on renewable energy, energy efficiency, energy poverty, and more.
- And the fact that I'm here – a climate envoy addressing energy ministers – reflects a recognition we all share that we must integrate energy and climate planning if we are to combat climate change effectively.
- Fortunately, meeting the energy and climate challenges presents important opportunities for expanding hemispheric cooperation and engagement.
- Before I turn to the topic of deepening our hemispheric cooperation, let me say a few words about the steps the Obama administration has taken domestically.
- Under President Obama, the United States has done more to reduce greenhouse gas emissions than ever before, both by supporting domestic policies that advance clean energy, climate security, and economic recovery; and by vigorously engaging in international climate negotiations.
- We have dedicated some \$80 billion of our economic stimulus package to promoting clean energy, established historic new fuel economy standards, and more.

- At the Pittsburgh G20 summit, the U.S. spearheaded an agreement by all G20 nations to phase out their fossil fuel subsidies over the medium term and to work with other developing countries to do the same. [Eliminating such subsidies could, by itself, reduce global ghg some 10% by 2050.]
- Additionally, the President is working with Congress to advance comprehensive climate and energy legislation that would promote clean energy investments and lower U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by more than 80 percent below current levels by 2050.
- On the international front, the United States has elevated climate and clean energy to a top tier foreign policy issue, and we have been actively engaged in climate negotiations.
- As you know, the Copenhagen meeting was a very difficult one in many respects. Many countries felt aggrieved on account of process concerns, and others felt chagrined on account of where substantive discussions were or were not moving.
- But I have a somewhat different view about Copenhagen. While the glass was definitely half empty, it was also half full. If you think about each of the six core issues that are at the center of this negotiation, real progress was made, though in different parts of the overall talks. With respect to adaptation, forests and technology, real progress was made in the negotiator level “contact” groups. With respect to mitigation, transparency and financing, real progress was made at the leader level discussions that culminated in the Copenhagen Accord.
- Although the Accord was not adopted by the full Conference of the Parties, to date, 120 countries have “signed on” to it, and some 75 have submitted their

domestic actions or targets for inclusion in appendices to the Accord, including all the major economies.

- Our focus for *this* year should be to build on the progress that was achieved last year on all these issues, whether through the Accord or the Framework Convention contact groups
- I am pleased to say that already there are several important efforts underway to carry out elements of the Accord. Progress on issues will in most cases have to be brought back into the UNFCCC process, but we still think it useful for constructive discussion to take place outside the UNFCCC as well as inside. In this regard, I would note that the UN has convened a High Level Advisory Group to conduct the study referenced in paragraph 9 of the Accord into potential sources of both public and private financing that can be used to meet the \$100B commitment made in paragraph 8 of the Accord; France and Norway are spearheading an international effort to support the Accord's goal of enhancing global efforts on forestry ; and donor countries are working to meet their fast start financing commitment under paragraph 8 of the Accord.
- Let me pause for a moment to report on what the U.S. is doing to meet our fast-start commitment. Our FY 2010 overall budget for international climate financing is approximately \$1.3B, while our request for FY 2011 has risen to \$1.9B. These numbers compare to a little over \$300M when President Obama took office. In addition, US development and export credit agencies are catalyzing some \$700M in clean energy investments in FY 2010 and \$870M in 2011.
- These resources – both the fast-start funding and the larger resources envisioned by 2020 -- will help to combat global climate change and help countries across

the globe and in our hemisphere prepare for and respond to the impacts of climate change.

- Of course, you know better than anyone the climate impacts your countries are already experiencing and stand to suffer in the future. I will highlight just a few:
 - Central America and the Caribbean are already feeling the effects of increasingly frequent and intense weather events, coral bleaching, coastal erosion and changing rainfall patterns.
 - By mid-century, unchecked increases in temperature due to climate change are projected to turn parts of the Amazon basin, often referred to as the lungs of the earth, into savanna.
 - Climate change is also causing glacial melt; most of the South American glaciers have seen substantial reductions in their volume. Within just the next 15 years, a considerable number of tropical glaciers are likely to completely disappear.
 - Glacial melt and changes in rainfall patterns are projected to significantly affect water availability for tens of millions of people and reduce hydropower generation, which accounts for a significant portion of electricity generation in several of your countries.
- These impacts all have significant economic, environmental, social and energy implications and pose threats to livelihoods across the hemisphere.
- When it comes down to it, combating climate change is about development – low-carbon development. Countries that would cling to the old developing world adage that development must precede environment make a fundamental error: in the world we inhabit now, the

only *sustainable* development is low-carbon development.

- We can each work within our governments to make the decision to pursue sustainable economic growth through the promotion of clean technology and creation of green jobs to ultimately lead to a low carbon future.
- Regionally, we all have a role to play in making this a reality, and you are already taking a lead through impressive domestic policies and emission reduction targets, all of which require linking energy and climate policy.
- For example:
 - Mexico has announced a long term goal of reducing its emissions by 50% by 2050.
 - Through a range of policies including reducing deforestation and increasing energy efficiency, Brazil inscribed a target of 36.1%-38.9% emissions reduction from BAU emissions by 2020 in the Copenhagen Accord.
 - Costa Rica inscribed in the Accord its long term economy-wide transformational effort to enable carbon-neutrality, that will help Costa Rica significantly deviate from BAU by 2021 and includes policies across a range of sectors like transport, energy, and forestry.
 - Chile has an energy efficiency law on the books that requires utilities to invest and produce five percent electricity from non-conventional energy sources by 2014, increasing to 10 percent by 2024.
 - Peru created a new environment ministry in 2008, and Environment Minister Brack has offered to

reduce deforestation to zero by 2020, which will reduce its emissions by over 45 percent.

- Under ECPA, you are also implementing projects ranging from clean energy centers in Mexico, Chile, and Peru, to renewable energy projects in Haiti, energy efficiency in Costa Rica, and transportation efficiency in the Caribbean.
- In addition to our work under ECPA, the United States is engaging the hemisphere on climate and energy issues through various dialogues such as the North American Leaders Summit and our ongoing bilateral dialogues with Mexico and Brazil, to name a few.
- And in the last two fiscal years, the U.S. has provided over \$60 million to support activities, including ECPA, which promote clean energy, work on forests and land use, and climate change adaptation in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Yesterday you heard the Secretary announce six energy and climate initiatives the United States is launching through this partnership that further integrate efforts to support energy and environmental security and throughout the hemisphere.
- But this is just the beginning. We can and should do more in other climate related areas. As ECPA is a uniquely collaborative partnership in which we *all* have something to offer, it provides a great way to foster cooperation in the region.
- I have heard from many of your counterparts in the climate world that your governments are increasingly prioritizing forests and land-use and adaptation to climate change. However, many are struggling with how best to do this.

- In the ECPA spirit, we look forward to working in partnership with those countries that are interested to help identify how best to meet these challenges and address the two key climate issues in our hemisphere, forests and land use and adaptation to climate change.
- First, we should work together to address forests and land use, which are significant source of emissions in Latin America.
- In doing so, we could draw upon and expand some of the regional work underway. You are all making efforts at home.
 - For example, a number of Latin American countries have shown interest in participating in REDD+. Brazil has led the way, setting up its Amazon Fund and taking sometimes difficult actions to reduce emissions from deforestation. In addition, fifteen countries in the region are members of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility. Within the Facility, Panama and Mexico have presented, and had approved, their REDD+ strategies. We are encouraged and share this enthusiasm, and want to support the ongoing and future efforts of countries on REDD+.
 - On our end, we can draw upon projects like the USAID and the Forest Service project in Guyana, to develop a long term carbon measurement and monitoring plan. Or our work with Colombia, with Afro-Colombian communities along the Pacific coast to significantly reduce deforestation in sovereign and collectively-owned ethnic territories.
- A second important climate issue that we should work together on is adaptation. We have many opportunities to

increase cooperation in order to better manage the climate impacts we are already starting to face at home.

- Again, you are taking action in your countries, and we have a strong foundation on which to build. Some of our projects already underway include supporting the collection and dissemination of climate change data in Central America through the SERVIR system based in Panama, as well as USAID's work with Barbados and six Eastern Caribbean island nations to design a climate adaptation program to address coastal risks from intense storms and sea level rise.
- I look forward to hearing ideas from across the region for building these pillars in the weeks to come. We will work with the relevant ministries in your countries to have these conversations and to begin operationalizing these two new ECPA pillars.
- To paraphrase what the Secretary said yesterday, we know that our hemisphere can be the leader, we know that we can do things that no one else is doing, and we can do better what others have already begun.
- Together, we can find new ways to collaborate and engage in dialogue across the hemisphere as we make real progress in our efforts to combat global climate change and achieve a low carbon, clean energy future.
- Thank you.

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