

U.S. Praises India for Climate Change Partnership

Harlan Watson, senior U.S. climate negotiator, addressed New Delhi conference



Assistant Secretary of Energy David Garman, left, and Senior Climate Negotiator Harlan Watson in an environment-friendly scooter at the Climate Technology Bazaar, New Delhi, November 10. (U.S. Embassy New Delhi Photo)

Harlan Watson, the U.S. senior climate negotiator and special representative, praised India for its cooperation with the United States in advancing the science and technology of climate change.

"Our bilateral partnership with India is particularly important because it allows us to share experiences and knowledge to advance climate change science and technology," Watson said in a conference on U.S.-India Cooperation on Climate Change in New Delhi November 11.

Watson said the United States is working with India on 18 initiatives that fall into two broad categories:

- (1) Energy and Technology, which addresses areas such as "energy efficiency, clean energy and distributed energy technologies, and improved electricity distribution and transmission efficiency;" and
- (2) Science and Environment, which addresses topics such as "forest carbon assessment, climate and environmental observations, economic and environmental modeling, and integrated environmental strategies."

Following is the transcript of Watson's remarks:

Overview of the U.S.-India Climate Change Partnership
 Dr. Harlan L. Watson, Senior Climate Negotiator and Special Representative
 Remarks at the U.S.-India Cooperation on Climate Change Briefing
 Hotel Samrat, New Delhi, India

November 11, 2003

Media Note: Indian Technology Bazaar and Adaptation Workshops (11/5/03)

Good afternoon. I am very pleased to be in India again. This is my fifth trip to India since we initiated our bilateral partnership on climate change last year, and I believe that the great progress that we have made demonstrates the success of our cooperation.

Climate change is an issue of great importance and concern to both the United States and India. While we may differ in our approaches, we are actively engaged -- both domestically and internationally -- in addressing this most important issue.

The U.S. climate change policy, as articulated by President Bush in his June 11, 2001, and February 14, 2002 climate change policy announcements, reaffirms the U.S. commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its ultimate objective -- to stabilize atmospheric greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations at a level that will prevent dangerous human interference with the climate.

The policy recognizes the need to take near-term actions, while maintaining economic growth that will

improve the world's standard of living. It is grounded in the reality that addressing the issue of climate change will require the sustained effort by all nations over many generations. And it will require the development and deployment of new transformational technologies during this century -- technologies that will allow us to produce and use energy with little or no net emissions of GHGs and technologies that will allow the use of abundant fossil fuels. We congratulate the Government of India for its emphasis on the importance of technology by hosting this important Technology Bazaar.

President Bush's climate change policy has three basic components designed to address both the near-term and long-term aspects of climate change: (1) slowing the growth of GHG emissions; (2) laying important groundwork for both current and future action; and (3) working with other nations to an efficient and effective global response.

The first component involves a series of actions aimed at slowing the growth of our GHG emissions. The President set a national goal of reducing U.S. GHG intensity (GHG emissions per dollar of GDP) by 18 percent over the next ten years -- a nearly 30% improvement over business-as-usual. Meeting this commitment will achieve some 500 million metric tons in cumulative carbon-equivalent emissions reductions from business-as-usual estimates through 2012, an amount equal to taking 70 million cars off the road. To achieve these near-term reductions, we are placing a great deal of emphasis on voluntary partnerships with industry, and I am pleased that Mr. Dennis Leaf of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency can be here today to describe several of these efforts.

The second component focuses on laying the groundwork for both current and future action -- investments in science, technology, and institutions. Better science to promote better decisionmaking; better technology to slow GHG emissions growth; and better institutions to enable us to pursue the lowest-cost emissions reduction opportunities, whatever they may be, whenever they arise over time, and wherever they occur both within and across nations. I am also delighted that Assistant Secretary of Energy David Garman can be here today as the keynote speaker to discuss the role of technology in more detail.

The third component is international cooperation. President Bush has highlighted the importance of international cooperation to develop an effective and efficient global response to the complex and long-term challenge of climate change. In the past two years, the U.S. has established bilateral climate change partnerships with 13 other countries and regions, of which India is one of our earliest partners.

Our bilateral partnership with India is particularly important because it allows us to share experiences and knowledge to advance climate change science and technology. We are working with India on 18 initiatives that fall into two broad categories:

- (1) Energy and Technology, which is addressing areas such as energy efficiency, clean energy and distributed energy technologies, and improved electricity distribution and transmission efficiency; and
- (2) Science and Environment, which is addressing topics such as forest carbon assessment, climate and environmental observations, economic and environmental modeling, and integrated environmental strategies. And to further explore adaptation issues, the U.S. is pleased to have provided funding for the UNFCCC adaptation workshop, and I note that the U.S. and India will co-chair that two-day workshop that starts tomorrow.

We are also pleased that the U.S. and India are jointly participating in several U.S.-led international science and technology initiatives. These include the Earth Observation Summit in Washington this summer that was attended by over 50 nations and international organizations. The goal of the Summit and follow-on activities is to design and implement over the next 10 years a new international, integrated, sustained, and comprehensive Earth observation system that will greatly advance our understanding of climate change.

The Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum, a Bush Administration initiative, is a multilateral effort to

advance technologies that capture and store carbon emissions. The Forum was inaugurated formally at a ministerial meeting in June, during which 13 coal producing and consuming nations and the European Commission signed an international charter establishing a framework for cooperative research and development.

And, finally, India will participate in next week's Ministerial meeting in Washington on the International Partnership for a Hydrogen Economy to address the technological, financial, and institutional barriers to hydrogen and develop internationally recognized technology standards to speed market penetration of new hydrogen-based technologies.

In closing, I want to emphasize that it is through cooperation in areas like these that will help not only the U.S. and India, but also the world, to address the critical issue of climate change. Thank you for your attention.

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