SUMMITS OF THE AMERICAS
- VIRTUAL PLATFORM -

**November 7, 2008**

Compilation of all the answers and comments included to date in the virtual forum on the second main theme of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain, *"Promoting Energy Security"* (Paragraphs 30-38), **open from October 27th to November 6th, 2008.**

**Sub-themes:**

1. **Sustainable energy systems**
2. **International cooperation and coordination to promote energy security & increase public awareness**

Once the forum is concluded, the Summits of the Americas Secretariat will prepare a summary-report of all comments and recommendations made by the participants (both in the English and Spanish fora). This report will be distributed to the National Secretariat and OAS member States in order to contribute to the process of negotiation of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain.

## 1. Sustainable energy systems- (paragraphs 30 - 33 of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain)

30. We will develop clean, affordable and sustainable energy systems by reducing the energy and carbon-intensity of our economies, promoting energy efficiency in all sectors, diversifying our energy by developing low-carbon and renewable sources, and encouraging the cleaner, more efficient use of fossil fuels. We commit to increase the contribution of renewable and low-carbon energy sources to meet a minimum of 50 per cent of our national primary energy demands by 2050 at the latest and will introduce, as necessary, new financing and policy frameworks in order to facilitate and accelerate this process.

31. We also commit to enhancing energy efficiency and conservation, especially in our transport systems and industrial sectors, among small and medium-sized enterprises and at the household level in order to promote more sustainable patterns of production and consumption. We encourage the introduction of minimum efficiency requirements and harmonized ratings systems for both domestic and industrial appliances. We will review building codes and raise the standards for energy efficiency, and develop urban planning guidelines to encourage more energy-efficient cities.

32. We will further promote diversification of energy technologies, infrastructure, supplies and routes, and facilitate non-discriminatory third-party access to transit infrastructure to encourage the development of transparent, efficient and orderly energy markets. We commit to making all relevant planning and regulatory requirements simpler, more coherent, transparent and effective by the end of 2012.

33. Recognizing the potential of new and emerging technologies for diversifying the energy matrix, we will encourage the development, manufacture and use of both current and next-generation biofuels including sugar-based, cellulosic, algal and bacterial biofuels, and will develop a set of compatible specifications by the end of 2015 in order to facilitate their trade and increased use, taking into account existing and planned standards. We will develop strategies for sustainable biomass cultivation and production, with particular regard to the need to ensure food security and, by the end of 2012 at the latest, develop a strategy for second-generation and more advanced biofuels that will ensure that they do not compete directly with other agricultural crops for land, water or fertilizer. We will also support the development and use of on and off-shore wind turbines, conventional and polymer photovoltaics, solar towers, geothermal and hydropower, hydrogen fuel cells and other new energy technologies.

(*Martin Huenneke - Monday, October 27, 2008*)

To open the discussion, we would like to post this question submitted by the Department of Sustainable Development of the OAS.

Paragraph 30th suggests that Countries will increase their contribution of Renewable Energy and low carbon energy sources to a minimum of 50% by 2050. Do you consider that this target realistic?, Feasible?, Adequate?

(*Lina Maria Marmolejo - Tuesday, October 28, 2008*)

Additionally to that, and also referring to paragraph 30$^{th}$, heads of State also commit to introduce new financing and policy frameworks in order to facilitate and accelerate this process. Which specific policies and strategies should be design and implemented taking into account the differences and diversity among western hemisphere countries?

(*Rubén Contreras - Wednesday, October 29, 2008*)

Could be a nice reality, but, first at all, it is necessary to clarify this target of 50% in reference to which baseline. In my personal opinion, the text could be rewriting as follows:

The countries of the region will have the technological potential to reduce its CO2 emissions by 50% compared to the 1990 level, while satisfying the expected demand for energy services in 2050. To reach this goal, it is necessary to create mechanisms and markets, to improve the technology cooperation among the countries, and to develop researches and policies to know the current reality on energy policies and renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies.

(*Lina Maria Marmolejo -Thursday, October 30, 2008*)

Additionally to your comment, I would like to ask you what do you think will be the optimal (cheaper) sustainable energy strategy that will allow our countries to meet this target?

(*Ruben Contreras - Thursday, October 30, 2008*)

World primary energy consumption today is about 14 terawatts (TW), or about 2.2 kilowatts (kW) per person (assuming we are currently about 7 billion of peoples in the world and by 2040 we will be over 9 billions).

I am sure, that, solar energy is by far the largest ultimate source of energy available for human use (other sources include geothermal and fission power). The Earth intercepts 170,000 TW of power from the sun; this solar flux exceeds human primary energy consumption by some four orders of magnitude.

Solar energy is also the ultimate source of fossil fuels, which are the fossilized remains of energy accumulated through photosynthesis in geological time, as well as the source of wind power (about 200 TW worldwide) and hydropower (driven by solar-powered water evaporation and precipitation in the planet's hydrologic cycle).

Harnessing a much larger proportion of the solar flux for commercial energy use, for example through photovoltaic conversion to electricity, is very likely to be the main long-term, low-cost solution to the problem of supplying sustainable, renewable energy (with zero-point energy power a possible long-term alternative). However, most forms of solar power are still too costly to provide plentiful, abundant, low-cost energy on the scale of current fossil-fuel use. A major, if not *the* major, energy challenge over the coming decades is to bring down the cost of solar energy. In the meantime, access biofuels, wind-energy and other, including the fossil energy must be maintained.

(*Lina Maria Marmolejo – Friday, October 31, 2008*)

How do you think this declaration could help to overcome the challenge of solar energy cost?

*(Claudia Salazar - Wednesday, October 29, 2008*)

I would like to highlight some of the comments made by Brazilian Ex-Minister Rodrigues in yesterday's lecture regarding biofuels:

*"The world challenge to shift to renewable and sustainable energy offers a very important opportunity to Latin American and Caribbean countries.*

- *Our countries, as Brazil has demonstrated, have the potential of responding to the increase in world demand for crops to produce both food and biofuels – no need for one supply to compete with the other.*
- *It is a myth that the increase in food prices responds to an increase in demand for crops to generate biofuels – it has been proven that this increase is solely due to market speculation.*
- *It is also a myth that it is necessary to sacrifice tropical forests such as the Amazon to increase harvests, there is enough arable land to increase production.*

- *Agroenergy is labor-intensive – it is produced mainly in the fields, not in industrial plants (important for work generation in LAC).*

**Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and Africa have the opportunity to lead a geopolitical change in this generation: 100 countries could provide biofuels to 200 nations, while currently 20 oil producers provide fossil fuels to the rest of the World."*

Paragraph 33 refers to how countries in the region envision dealing with this challenge in order to benefit from the opportunity it provides. Do participants consider this to be enough? What specific actions or strategies could our leaders follow?, which actors should be called upon?
*Oct 28 2008 - Lecture Series of the Americas with Roberto Rodrigues , Former Minister of Agriculture of Brazil & Co-chairman of the Interamerican Ethanol Commission (IEC) (Audio in Spanish only)
Powerpoint Presentation by Roberto Rodrigues (English)

*(Marva Ribeiro – Tuesday, November 4, 2008*)

First sentence in 30 states that energy of a country will be reduced. What does this mean? Is the statement speaking about energy or energy consumption?

(*Mark Lambrides - Tuesday, November 4, 2008*)

Marva, the sentence reads ..."reducing the energy and carbon-intensity of our economies..." so it intends to suggest reducing energy intensity. This could be made clearer for sure. The idea is really to improve the efficiency of energy use; and reduce carbon-intensity.

*(Kevin de Cuba – Tuesday, November 4, 2008.*)

Ms. Ribeiro,

To answer your question, related to "less energy" as part of paragraph 30, what is meant here is the reduction of the energy intensity. This can be done by implementing energy saving operational manuals or simply using existing systems or technologies more wisely. Also the introduction of energy efficient technologies can contribute to reduction of the energy intensity of a service or activity without losing its core purpose or value. So in other words an energy efficient fridge will continue to deliver its main purpose of cooling (sometimes even better than conventional fridges), but with lower electricity consumption.

But what is more interesting is that here we are only talking about the **usage phase** of the product. To be truly making a change in energy intensity it is required to change the way a product is designed and manufactured and introduce it competitively into the conventional market without generating waste! This is the concept of Cradle-to-Cradle, please see:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IoRjz8iTVoo
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKHhXcIjakQ
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BpdAFtX82_M

This is for me, definitely the solution to all our environmental and energy problems. The simple combination of Cradle-to-Cradle with Renewable Energy is the simple answer to our sustainable development challenges. Please search more about this concept and I would feel delighted to respond to any counter argument to this idea.

(*Lina Maria Marmolejo – Wednesday, November 5, 2008)*

Dear Kevin,

Thanks a lot for your answer and resources to better explain the concept of energy intensity. I would like to draw your attention to paragraph 31, in which countries are committed to "enhancing energy efficiency and conservation, especially in our transport systems and industrial sectors, among small and medium-sized enterprises and at the household level in order to promote more sustainable patterns of production and consumption." and ask you what do you think are the main differences between energy efficiency and energy conservation? Why are these concepts important to business and consumers? Which are the incentives to implement improvements in energy efficiency?

*(Christoph Tagwerker, Thursday, November 6, 2008)*

Dear all,

Within the diversification of the energy matrix, energy efficiency, is the most sustainable, cheapest and cleanest energy source and should therefore stand on the top of the agenda. Parts of the increasing energy demand can be met me efficiency, which makes it a w source of energy. Some impressive examples:

- 16 industrialized countries met **50%** of increasing demand by EE (1990-2005) resulting in **US$180 billion** savings in fuel (Source: International Energy Agency)
- Brazil-PROCEL: **20 billion reais** avoided in expansion of electricity supply (1986-2007) (Source: PROCEL 2007)
- Mexico-FIDE: **23 million** barrels of oil (Source: FIDE 2007)
- By saving 10% of its energy demand in 2018 LAC could save US$36 billion in necessary investments for electricity generation (Source IDB 2008; http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=1643041)

(*Claudia Salazar – Thursday, November 6, 2008*)

How do you think Governments can commit to these levels of savings and energy efficiency? How can Civil Society contribute?

*(Christoph Tagwerker - Friday, November 7, 2008)*

Governments should first think about saving energy instead of thinking about building new power plants. There's huge potential for savings in LAC in all sectors. Everyone can start in his home by installing energy efficient light bulbs, turning of lights when not needed, turning of AC when not at home... but first you have to be aware of it and then act accordingly!!

(*Claudia Salazar – Friday, November 7, 2008)*

I am pleased to share with you this comment, sent to me via e-mail by a participant from Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Anil Ramdatt:

Concerning energy security, there is little market for other types of energy sources besides oil and gas. While the world has expanded this research into other areas, these types must be sustainable and eco-friendly along with the systems of processing and dispersement. Presently, the main view is that the present energy sources are not eco-friendly and too expensive to implement equipment t make them less damaging to the environment and people. This problem is there for a financial and ethical conflict by the corporate industry which is making money vs. being eco-friendly; obviously they will choose to make money. In terms of energy security, I not quite sure about it except securing oil reserves and conquest of other nations for these reserves. These are my basic points based on the information available.

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**2. International cooperation and coordination to promote energy security & increase public awareness - (paragraphs 34 – 38 of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain)**

34. Many renewable sources of energy are intermittent or only available in particular locations. We will, therefore, develop and invest in new energy infrastructures, support the development of cross-border, efficient low-carbon energy generation and distribution grids and other energy-trading and cooperation networks. We will cooperate to improve the security, safety and stability of our critical energy infrastructure and supply networks and to ensure that all links in the energy supply chain operate to the highest standards of human health and safety, environmental protection and physical security.

35. We commit to the promotion of clean energy through research and development, the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, and the commercialization of new, cleaner energy solutions. Priority will be given to increasing international cooperation and sharing information in the search for solutions that can benefit all our nations.

36. We will increase public awareness on energy and environmental issues and commit to ensuring, by 2012, that the people of the Americas have universal access to accurate, reliable and impartial information on energy, environmental and climate change issues.

37. Recognizing that the issues of the availability, cost and security of our energy supplies, our economic competitiveness and the sustainability of our environment are closely intertwined, we commit to the development of a coherent policy framework that takes into consideration our diverse situations, circumstances and opportunities and allows for the simultaneous strengthening and diversification of all our economies.

38. We, therefore, instruct all Ministers with responsibility for Energy, Planning, Regulation and Finance, within the framework of the OAS and the Sustainable Energy Partnership of the Americas (SEPA), with the support and guidance of the IDB and the World Bank, taking into account the diverse conditions, opportunities,

legislative and regulatory frameworks in our countries, and building on existing energy cooperation and integration initiatives, to develop a strategy of cooperation among our nations, international organizations and the private sector that will increase energy efficiency, diversify energy sources, minimize environmental impact, strengthen energy independence, and secure access to safe, affordable energy supplies for all, especially the poorest. We further instruct our Ministers to develop this strategy by the end of 2011 at the latest.

(*Martin Huenneke - Monday, October 27, 2008*)

To open the discussion, we would like to post this question submitted by the Department of Sustainable Development of the OAS:

Paragraphs 37-38 encourage the establishment of regional policies, strategies, and frameworks to stimulate sustainable energy development and use. What kinds of actions are conducive to meeting this objective?

(*Kristjan Sigurdson - Friday, October 31, 2008*)

I'd like to thank you for taking the time to read this personal contribution to the discussion regarding the establishment of regional policies, strategies, and frameworks to stimulate sustainable energy development and use in the hemisphere.

Smaller oil extracting countries in the Americas are often in the position of requiring external assistance to extract and refine their energy products. This leaves them in a position where they often lack significant leverage to ensure that their international oil extraction collaborators take the steps necessary to protect the environment to the highest standards. This lack of leverage also makes it easy for oil companies to convince governments to allow them to sell their rights to other international companies, with the economic threat of a halt to production always hanging over the governments in question.

It is important to recognize and to support the role played by various social actors in holding internationally active oil companies accountable for their environmental effects. These actors, whether they are NGOs, activist groups or other influences on general public perception, are very important factors in environmental protection, as they are often crucial in relaying the results of the activities of multinational corporations to those most fundamentally responsible for the actions of these corporations. *Further recognizing the role played by key social actors in providing transparency for international collaboration in oil production, and helping these actors to play this role, is an important step that must be taken*. It is also important to understand and plan for the effect of the frequent changing of hands of oil-production rights on the effectiveness of these social actors in performing their role.

To explain a little better what I am referring to, I will use one personally relevant example:

As a Canadian citizen I am particularly concerned with the activities of the Canadian oil companies that operate throughout the Americas, and the kind of legacies, environmentally or otherwise, that they may leave in specific areas. While many Canadians are very concerned with the actions of their companies abroad, especially in less-developed countries, it is often the case that when oil rights in these countries are sold-off by a Canadian company, the majority of concerned Canadians are led to write-off our nation’s responsibility for any future environmental, or social problems that arise from oil production that carries on under a different company/country in the future. Attention necessarily shifts to wherever the Canadian company in question begins its new operations.

For instance, a Canadian oil company in Ecuador selling off its rights to extract from a particular oil-block to a Chinese-owned firm means that many of the inroads made by Canadian social actors towards ensuring that the Canadian company does everything it can to protect Ecuador’s environment are suddenly in peril of being lost. This is not to say that a Chinese oil company is destined to be less respectful of the environment, it simply means that the specific pressures (shareholder opinions, NGO observation and pressure, public perceptions) by which the Canadian company was held primarily accountable for its environmental record are instantly and significantly made mostly irrelevant as the ownership shifts.

For the oil companies involved in the transfer of production operations, it may be the case that very little disruption takes place in oil production operations, the ownership changes, but local operations continue largely in tact. For those social actors playing crucial roles in holding the companies accountable, the transfer of roles and responsibilities is no where near as seamless. Indeed, this transition creates a regulatory gap that takes a great deal of time and resources to fill.

Those crafting the Summits of the Americas declarations should attempt to play a greater role in ensuring that rights to oil extraction areas are not so easily passed from one company to another. In addition, Summits leadership should attempt to ensure that extensive planning takes place, perhaps charged to the oil company's tab, in order that the companies buying existing oil extraction rights will be held to the same or greater degree of accountability as the previous owners. This may have the positive effect of keeping oil companies engaged for longer periods within areas in which they have initiated oil extraction, and this kind of consistency can only be a good thing for everyone involved, especially in the longer-term.

If the transfer of rights must occur, then it is important to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and resources from the existing social actors playing roles in holding companies accountable to the new ones forced to inherit new sets of responsibilities.

(*Lina Maria Marmolejo – Wednesday, November 5, 2008*)

Dear Kristjan,

As you mention, there is the need and greatest pressure on business to improve environmental performance and corporate practices worldwide. Monitoring and accountability instruments could help business to respond to environmental challenges while maintaining operational revenues. How to truly engage firms and corporations in environmental accountable and sustainable initiatives?

(*Lina Maria Marmolejo - Wednesday, October 29, 2008*)

I would like to ask the participants, through which specific strategies, actions and actors could our countries increase and promote research and development in order to guarantee clean energy production and environmental stewardship?

(*Juan Cruz Monticelli - Wednesday, October 29, 2008*)

The answer to this question is threefold.

First of all, the countries of the region must promote clean energy internally through their policies, laws and regulations. This work at the national level sets the ground for regional cooperation among nations. It also shows the vocation of a government to truly advance clean energy R&D. In other words, a country would hardly be willing to cooperate in expanding RE/EE regionally, if it does not do so within its own borders. Therefore, countries must star by putting in place robust national legislations and policies that encourage the use of clean energy. There are numerous policies and laws that a nation can implement to promote clean energy. Some policies increase **supply** of these technologies, these include tax incentives to reduce capital and operating costs for renewable energy, direct cash payment incentives to increase the number of renewable energy facilities, low-cost capital program incentives to increase financing for renewable energy facilities, etc. other policies increase the **demand** of clean energy policies, these include net metering, line extension policies, utility-supplied green pricing options, green marketing, etc.

Secondly, two or more nations can promote cooperation between or among each other. Regional cooperation among nations can consist of technology cooperation, exchange or transfer, depending on the circumstances of each nation. For example, The United States and Brazil have developed considerable expertise in the bio-energy arena. In order to share their best practices with other countries of the region, both countries entered into a biofuels bilateral agreement. The United States and Brazil are providing technical and policy assistance to El Salvador, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and St. Kitts & Nevis to advance the development and use of biofuels. Cooperation is also possible at the technological or financial levels.

Finally, although society as a whole contributes, in varying degrees, to increasing and promoting clean energy, change will not occur unless governments take decisive action to put in place adequate laws, regulations and policies that promote renewable energy and energy efficiency. The work of the government is essential to bring about real change in the field of energy. Without government intervention, the advancement of clean energy becomes extremely difficult. Nevertheless, civil society can also influence this process. For example a consumer that purchases green energy from an electricity utility is providing an incentive for the generation and sale of such energy, customers buying more fuel-efficient cars are sending a strong message to the car industry, and voters choosing a candidate that supports clean energies are sending a strong message to politicians. Everybody plays a role in energy.

(*Claudia Salazar - Wednesday, October 29, 2008*)

According to your comment, one of the main barriers to promote clean energy relates to the lack of specific and strong policies, laws and regulations in the region. However, this issue is not addressed in the Draft Declaration.

Par. 35, for example, declares that: "We commit to the promotion of clean energy through research and development, the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, and the commercialization of new, cleaner energy solutions…"

Do you believe that it would be important for this paragraph to mention the introduction/development of such national laws and policies as a means to promote clean energy?, Would you include a reference to this in another part of the Declaration?
What is the opinion of other participants?

(*Juan Cruz Monticelli – Friday, October 31, 2008)*

It should definitely be mentioned somewhere in the Declaration. Since this paragraph of the Declaration makes reference to cooperation among countries, perhaps this is not the best place to put it. Other paragraphs are more explicit as to the recommendations to the countries in matters of sustainable energy. A second option would be to have it in both places. The matter of internal policies and laws that promote sustainable energy is so vital to the topic at hand that it does not hurt to be redundant.

**3. Lecture Series of the Americas on Energy Security**

(*Claudia Salazar – Tuesday, October 28, 2008*)

It is my pleasure to invite you to view today at 3:00pm (Washington DC time), the Lecture Series of the Americas, organized by the OAS Department of International Affairs on this key theme of the Fifth Summit of the Americas.
**Speaker:** ROBERTO RODRIGUES, Former Minister of Agriculture of Brazil & Co-chairman of the Interamerican Ethanol Commission (IEC)
**Subject:** *"Facing Energy Security in the Americas through Agroenergy Sources"*
**Date and Place:** October 28th, 2008, Hall of the Americas, 3:00pm, Organization of American States, Washington, D.C.
**The Lecture Series is transmitted live on the web at www.oas.org. (Please go to OAS Webcast, in the inferior part of the page). You may also access the video after the Lecture at: http://www.oas.org/catedra/english/video.asp#

(*Claudia Salazar – Wednesday, October 29, 2008*)

For those of you interested in more information on yesterday's Lecture, please refer to: Powerpoint Presentation by Roberto Rodrigues, Ex-Minister of Agriculture of Brazil and Co-President of the Inter-American Ethanol Commission

(*Abraham Fergusson – Sunday, November 2, 2008*)

We the young people should focus on expanding the use of clean energy, and environmental technologies and practices to better economic performance, promote energy security; improve the quality of life and advance resource sustainability; for example while on a two weeks long workshop held for youth of the Wider Caribbean in the US Virgin Island we experienced a completely self sufficient community of rambling countryside, agricultural fields and many forms of sustainable energy e.g wind turbines created energy, small windmills pumped water, solar panels installed on the roof tops or tied onto street lamps. A waterwheel harness the river, the village received heat from a geothermal heat pump and biomass from plants and animals were used for heat and power - At the end of our stay we all felt more appreciative of the environment, healthier and with the knowledge that it can be duplicated throughout the region -- Yes! it can happen..... if we all want to survive.
Abe
Youth Ambassador Natural Disasters
Environmental "Warrior" Agent
National Award for Advocacy

(*Hernan Chaimovich - Sunday, November 2, 2008*)

Dear All,

I could not participate in this Forum before because I was Chairing a Workshop (October 29 - 31) organized by IANAS and the Argentinean Academy of Sciences on Sustainable Energy in Buenos Aires. This Workshop was based on the InterAcademy Council Report "Lightening the Way". You can google this Report. I obviously made an effort to engage all participants to contribute to the OAS forum. Having said this I want to share some of the preliminary conclusions, since the full Report will only be available mid-December.

1. Governments have to play a central role, not only as regulators but also fixing adequate tariffs since renewable energies that create jobs, promote prosperity in the long run and are sustainable may not be competitive with the currently used sources.
2. The region, and our species in the planet will not survive with a business as usual policy
3. Private sector in many of the countries of the region is capable of taking mayor challenges given the right incentives
4. The decisions on which renewable energy source is most convenient for each country depends on the country. Although this declaration may seem obvious we are living in an irrational world where even respected scientists are "For" or "Against" certain technologies without much rationality.
5. The general dilemma "biofuels" versus "food" does not exist. Some countries do not have the geography/climate/technology/etc to plant for biofuels and food, others do.
6. The only feedstock for ethanol that makes economic and energetic sense with first generation technologies is sugar cane.
7. All countries should urgently devise their own roadmap to set up strategies for sustainable energy
8. At this time there is no such a thing as sustainable democracy without a parallel project in sustainable energy.

(*Lina Maria Marmolejo – Monday, November 3,2008*)

Dear Hernan,

Thank you very much for your contribution and for sharing with all of us the main conclusions of the Buenos Aires meeting. We look forward to read more about it and the next steps.

Attach to this message you will find the Executive Summary of the InterAcademy Council Report “Lightening the Way: Toward a Sustainable Energy Future“

(*Hernan Chaimovich - Monday, November 3,2008*)

There is a reason behind my difficulty for following the recommendations’ of the background documents. One of them is that they generally limit the creativity of whoever is contributing to these fora. So instead I will comment some of the points made yesterday. And thanks for downloading the IAC report. The biofuels versus food dilemma has been present in our (continental discussions for a long time. My recommendation is that OAS should convene a specific Meeting on this and invite Civil Society Organizations to take part in the debate. Preferably the meeting should not be in the lace since visa problems are getting worse everywhere.

This point has to be debated because the politics behind it are heavy and even old Fidel has (absurd) opinions about this.

It is clear that science and technology has a place in this discussion. It is also crystal clear that no single solution will be possible in this field (i.e., biofuels) for all countries. Even for single countries different regions could decide on different solutions. The fact that one Latin American country has the best science and technology in the world for first generation ethanol production from sugar cane has made Latin American countries instead of closer more distant. This distance is one of the most important contributions for the lack of relevance of South America and the lace on Caribbean region in world politics. Enough for now

Best

Hernan

(*Rudi Daniel – Tuesday, November 4, 2008.*)

I have not yet been able to get to the lecture series and I have not contributed to this debate simply out frustration and perhaps a little anger too. I am a R&D engineer and perhaps since coming to the Caribbean where I now reside I can see a little more clearly the politics of poverty. Man cannot live by bread alone yet for some unknown reason even those who cannot afford to feed themselves, have no choice but to buy oil to generate energy. A monopolistic position. The developing countries save but a few enlightened ones are politically too weak to make their own decisions and many would prefer to do nothing because they will always get a hand out from some other country. Energy is a global monopoly and oil has started many a

war. It is for the first world and developed countries i.e. industrialized countries to re-chart the Energy landscape, surely.... we have no shortage of fuel technologies.

(*Mark Lambrides - Tuesday, November 4, 2008)*

The food-versus-fuel myth was actually a central theme of Rodriguez" lecture on October 28. There were many civil society organizations present and the event was in fact webcast as well. But, I do agree that this is a key topic that we, the OAS, may help to highlight/enlighten better throughout the region. We will be making some efforts in this regard at the upcoming sustainable energy regional meeting in El Salvador (December 11, 2008 in San Salvador). There will be a biofuels specific panel that will address some of these issues. For more information on this event see: http://www.oas.org/dsd/reeep/ReunionSICA.htm

(*Claudia Salazar –Wednesday, November5, 2008*)

Thank you Abe!,

I think you make a key point, it is not only what the governments and the private sector can do to ensure energy sustainability, it is every citizen of our region, every person that chooses to lower their negative impact on the environment.

The Declaration specifically mentions the need to increase public awareness in two paragraphs: 31. "*We also commit to enhancing energy efficiency and conservation, especially in our transport systems and industrial sectors, among small and medium-sized enterprises and at the household level in order to promote more sustainable patterns of production and consumption"*

36. *We will increase public awareness on energy and environmental issues and commit to ensuring, by 2012, that the people of the Americas have universal access to accurate, reliable and impartial information on energy, environmental and climate change issues.*

How do you think that governments and civil society may contribute to increasing awareness in this regard?, How could this 2012 target be measured?, what should be measured?, What do other participants think?

(*Claudia Salazar – Friday, November 7, 2008)*

I am pleased to share with you this comment, sent to me via e-mail by a participant from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Mr.Rudi Daniel

The subject matter is also very controversial.

Rodrigues's presentation is a very interesting one and one I believe to have merit now and in the future. It is interesting that whilst some of the CARICOM countries are barely feeding themselves, they also have some of the highest energy costs in the region; whilst attempting to woo new technology investment. So I guess that the respective Governments do not see energy costs as a significant factor in private sector development! They certainly have no shortage of advice from both the US and Europe. On the other hand, Guyana has advertised it's large land resources to its neighbors and few if any of the countries have even considered large scale growing of sugarcane commercially, yet it was once of the most important crops in the English speaking Caribbean during British rule. Of course Trinidad has become a large producer of ethanol and I do hope that our region CARICOM will embrace.

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