



VIRTUAL PLATFORM OF THE SUMMITS OF THE AMERICAS

OEA/Ser.
PVCA/FV-2/08
10 November 2008
Original: Spanish

PROMOTING ENERGY SECURITY

(Report of the Virtual Forum held from October 27 to November 6, 2008)

PROMOTING ENERGY SECURITY

(Report of the Virtual Forum held from October 27 to November 6, 2008)

I. Introduction

In September 2008, the Summits of the Americas Secretariat launched the Summits of the Americas Virtual Platform, in coordination with the OAS/SEDI Department of Human Development, through the Educational Portal of the Americas, and with the support of the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas / International Development Research Centre (IDRC/ICA). In preparation for the Fifth Summit of the Americas, the Summits Secretariat is organizing a series of virtual fora on the main topics addressed by the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain.

The main objective of the virtual fora is to open a space to promote the participation of different social actors in the Summits Process by using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). The results of the fora are presented for the consideration of the National Secretariat, National Coordinators and Permanent Missions during the negotiation of the text of the Declaration to be undertaken in the framework of the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG) meetings. In addition, the results will be published online and will be utilized as reference material by the social actors that participate in the face-to-face meetings that are being coordinated by the Summits Secretariat.

This report summarizes the main comments and recommendations from the forum on “Promoting Energy Security,” held from October 27 to November 6, 2008. The information in this report has been divided into subtopics and, to the extent possible, has been classified into the following categories: (i) priorities for social actors in this area, (ii) proposed action strategies, (iii) main comments on the Declaration, and (iv) suggestions on the language and text of the Declaration.

II. Main Comments and Recommendations

During the period of the forum’s exchanges, two subtopics related to energy security were discussed: sustainable energy systems, and international cooperation and coordination for promoting energy security and increasing public awareness. The following paragraphs highlight the main comments and recurring recommendations that emerged:

- The forum emphasized the importance of guaranteeing energy security in the region, and it proposed that the topic’s crosscutting nature be expressly recognized. It consequently called on the region’s governments, through the Summits Process, to promote topics related to energy security on a comprehensive basis, such as the promotion of sustainable development, environmental management, exploration of natural resources, human rights, and food security.
- The participants also insisted on the need to establish national strategies to set the basis for and to expand incentives for the strengthening of intergovernmental and intersectoral partnerships at the regional level and for the promotion of international cooperation.
- Constant emphasis was placed on the role that both governments and civil society must play in the formulation and implementation of policies and strategies to promote the use of renewable and sustainable energy. The participants also stressed the importance of designing strategies to heighten awareness among the public about saving energy and about the impact that all actors have on the environment.
- Finally, one of the topics addressed – not only in the forum, but also in the Lecture Series of the Americas with Mr. Roberto Rodrigues, former Minister of Agriculture of Brazil – was the food-versus-fuel myth, in which emphasis was placed on the importance of the role of the OAS in helping to clarify and illustrate this topic in the region’s countries.

The following section highlights comments made during the virtual forum on subthemes addressed in specific paragraphs of the Draft Declaration:

1. Sustainable energy systems (paragraphs 30-33)

- Priorities for social actors in this area: The forum emphasized the need to establish a regional strategy covering both promotion policies and assessment and monitoring mechanisms to follow up on the progress made in the production and distribution of sustainable energy. These strategies must include the provision of incentives for scientific and technological research into clean energy and, above all, address the question of energy on a comprehensive basis, without losing sight of areas that are closely related to it, such as natural resource management, environmental impact, climate change, and food security.

The forum also insisted on the need for government agendas to maintain the priority placed on the possible use of other sources of energy: solar, biofuels, wind power, biomass, etc. Parallel to this, mention was made of the usefulness of developing strategies to overcome the challenge posed by the high costs of producing those ecological energy alternatives.

Finally, some comments noted the importance of improving access to energy and energy supplies in rural communities and in high-risk areas and, at the same time, referred to energy shortages and their correlation with poverty.

“The discussions seem to be focused on specific projects rather than on a comprehensive policy framework to promote energy sustainability. It appears that everyone forgets that the problem is not only reducing energy intensity, but also to ensure delivery to all places where it is needed”.

*Georgina Sandoval, Mexico
CIATEJ, Researcher*

- Proposed strategies for action: The participants underscored the importance of implementing public awareness campaigns to foster moderate energy consumption and citizens’ responsibility in helping the development of sustainable energy systems. They also proposed promoting the right of citizens to clean energy.

“The Commitment of Port of Spain should promote the Right of citizens to access sustainable energies. This would lead to the need to establish and strengthen policy frameworks in the countries so that this may be actually achieved in practice”.

*Gabriela Munoz, Ecuador
Ecuadorian Center of Environmental Law*

Possible solutions to energy and environmental problems were offered, such as the “Cradle to Cradle” concept¹ which proposes a new approach for reducing energy intensity, not only by reducing energy consumption, but also by increasing the efficiency of all products, strategies, and policies from the moment of their design or conception.

“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 through efficiency, which makes it a source of energy...”

*Christoph Tagwerke, United States
SECCI, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)*

¹ The term was coined by authors Michael Braungart and William McDonough in their book *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things*. New York: North Point Press, 2002.

The forum also called for the creation of mechanisms for improving cooperation to contribute to exchanges of best practices and to the definition of regional realities related to energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Finally, emphasis was placed on the importance of promoting intersectoral partnerships (including the academic and scientific communities, the private sector, and social actors) to help define concrete research and development programs in pursuit of the commitments set out in the Declaration.

“It would be fundamental for governments to establish policies towards achieving this commitment, where social actors such as universities and scientists, among others, would participate from the conception, formulation and implementation of the policies. This is important because it is not only about developing new sources of energy, it is also about guaranteeing that it does not impact health, ensuring environmental protection and eliminating any risk that may harm security and human rights.”

*Maritza Melara, El Salvador
Human Rights Consultant*

- Regarding the Declaration: Participants questioned the plausibility of reaching the goals set forth in the Declaration and particularly those in paragraph 30 with the target of increasing *“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.”* A proposal was therefore made to establish a baseline that could serve as a reference for gauging progress made toward those targets.

- Suggestions to the language and text of the Declaration: It was suggested that paragraph 30 be recast 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.”*

Also in this paragraph, mention was made of the need to clarify the phrase *“We will develop clean, affordable and sustainable energy systems by reducing the energy and carbon-intensity of our economies”* by emphasizing the main idea of improving efficiency in energy use and reduction of carbon-intensity.

2. International cooperation and coordination for promoting energy security and increasing public awareness (paragraphs 34-38)

- Priorities for social actors in this area: The forum’s participants underscored as a priority the need to clearly establish the agencies responsible for this area in each country and defining their legislative functions and responsibilities. At the same time, they noted that these agencies should be provided both with access to technology, and with appropriate training to guarantee efficient implementation.

“It is necessary to strengthen the institutions responsible for clean energies in two aspects: defining clear goals and designating the authorities responsible to achieve those goals; and building the capacity of the public administration to apply clean energy legislation.”

*Juan Cruz Monticelli, United States
Energy Specialist, DSD/OEA*

The participants also expressed their concern regarding the absence of legislative frameworks and national policies that promote the use of renewable energy and enable the foundations to be set for experience-exchange programs, as well as financial and/or technological cooperation among the region’s countries. They also identified policies that could be implemented to increase the supply of clean energy and the demand for it, such as tax incentives for reducing the financial and operating costs associated with renewable energy, net metering of consumption, and line extension programs.

In addition, they stressed the need to recognize the joint leading role that civil society organizations and governments must play in influencing the general public's perceptions, bringing about a real change in the area of energy, and making progress towards an increased use of clean and renewable energy.

"It is clear that nothing will be achieved by producing renewable, clean and efficient energy if the end user continues to make an irrational use of that energy, thereby destabilizing energy supply and demand."

*Richard Mauricio Maquera, Peru
Megainternet, Manager*

Finally, participants highlighted the need to strengthen the role of the private sector and multinational companies to secure their commitment toward the development of initiatives for environmental conservation and social responsibility, which would include reducing the negative impacts in those areas of the region where they carry out their economic activities.

"Our energy proposal is that the leaders of the countries must be supervised and that proof should be provided on the undertaking of effective coordination actions with civil society."

*Representative of the Indigenous Peoples of Peru
COICAP and the Agricultural Producers Association*

- Proposed strategies for action: The forum again underscored the importance of creating awareness programs on energy and environmental matters that are able to penetrate different sectors of society, chiefly through the education systems and mass dissemination campaigns.

"We therefore consider that it is the States, Governments and Nations in our hemisphere that shall design and develop true education policies...related to energy consumption...it is institutionally appropriate for States to communicate, educate and foster consumer and producer awareness in the crisis that we are currently living...we continue to ignore energy's application, consumption and savings criteria."

*José Alberto Gautreau Columba, Dominican Republic
President, Management and Legal Procedures*

It also proposed to recognize and provide further support for initiatives in the areas of monitoring and corporate social responsibility undertaken by social actors and intended to oversee the actions of large multinationals in the countries of the Americas. In this regard, particular emphasis was placed on the actions of oil drilling companies.

"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."

*Kristjan Sigurdson, Canada
Department of Human Development. OAS*

- Regarding the Declaration: Participants noted that the Declaration could potentially play a key role in promoting greater social and political support for biofuel production in the region. The food-versus-fuel dilemma was intensely debated and was also the focal point of the address given by Brazil's former agriculture Minister, Roberto Rodrigues, an expert on the topic. Both his address and the interventions of other experts during the forum revealed that this perceived problem does not in fact exist and can be considered a mere myth. To address this debate, the forum insisted on the need for the OAS and other regional agencies to bring together social actors, governments, and other stakeholders in order to help clarify and combat this myth in the region.

“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.”

*Hernán Chaimovich, Brazil
Chemistry Institute, Universidade de São Paulo,*

- Suggestions to the language and text of the Declaration: The forum stressed that the Declaration should include a specific paragraph stating that it is important for governments to develop legislative frameworks, regulations, and specific policies to promote clean and sustainable energy.

In addition, it was suggested that the following text be added to paragraph 35: *“We commit to assigning annual resources to research and development, from either our own sources or from multilateral agencies, in order to identify more efficient and lower-cost energy solutions that will enable us, in the medium term, to reach a broader segment of developing countries rural populations, while at the same time not neglecting the care and conservation of the environment.”*

Similarly, emphasis was placed on the need for paragraphs 36, 37, and 38 to address more directly and in greater depth the role and responsibility of nongovernmental organizations and civil society alongside governments in implementing the Declaration’s mandates.

“We are currently living in a new era where civil society is involved and also takes upon itself responsibilities. Hence, there is no need for countries to continue to embrace the old protectionist paradigm.”

*Juan Ocles, Ecuador
Development and Racial Equity Centre of Ecuador – CEDESTU*

Finally, the participants requested the inclusion of the following text in paragraph 38: *“We recommend that the countries include, in their legal frameworks, the need to establish that each project for the generation, transportation or distribution of conventional electrical energy must be obligated to assign a percentage of clean-energy generation, either through injections into the network or by means of isolated systems.”*

To see a compilation of all the comments and suggestions offered by the social actors who participated in the forum on Energy Security, [click here](#)

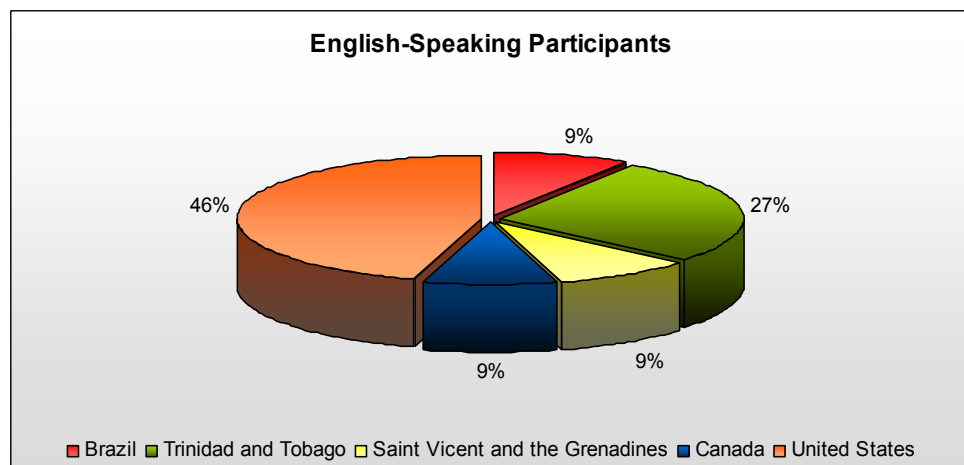
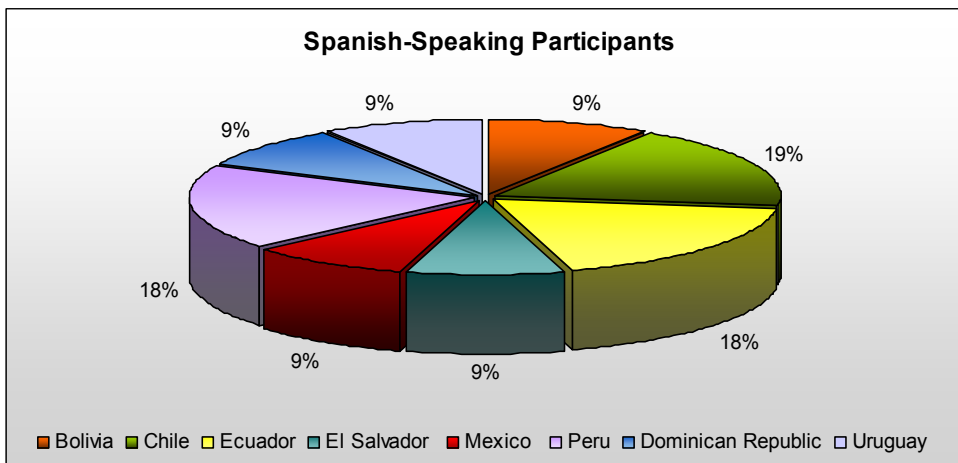
Annexes

A. Forum Participants

The number of registered users of the Summit's Virtual Platform has risen to 399 since its launch on September 8. During the 12 days the virtual exchange lasted, a total of 22 users participated actively: 11 in the English-language forum, and 11 in the Spanish forum.

Noteworthy in the English-speaking forum were representatives from the Caribbean (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago), as well as from Brazil, Canada, and the United States. Most of the participants in the Spanish-language forum came from the Andean region (Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru), and there was also a moderate contingent from the Dominican Republic, El Salvador and Mexico, along with those of the Southern Cone (Chile and Uruguay).

In general, the participants represented international organizations, academia, the private sector, and civil society organizations.



B. List of Participants

	País	Nombre	Institución	Cargo	Correo electrónico
1	Bolivia	Yolanda Dips Salvatierra	SERCOIN LTDA	Gerente General	sercoin@ceibo.entelnet.bo
2	Brazil	Hernan Chaimovich	Instituto de Química, Universidade de São Paulo, SP, Brasil	Profesor	hchaimo@usp.br
3	Canada	Kristjan Sigurdson	Department of Human Development, OAS	Consultant	ksigurdson@oas.org
4	Chile	Ruben Contreras Lisperguer	Department of Sustainable Development SEDI/OAS	Energy Specialist	usdecpr5@oas.org
5	Chile	Nhury Inés Gutiérrez Vilches	Presidenta Comité Enlace OEA	Alianza Mesas Redondas Panamericanas	nhury@hotmail.com
6	Dominican Republic	Jose Alberto Gautreau Columba	Gestion y Tramite Legal	Presidente	cogautreau@hotmail.com
7	Ecuador	Gabriela Muñoz Vélez	Centro Ecuatoriano de Derecho Ambiental	Directora Ejecutiva	direccionejecutiva@ceda.org.ec
8	Ecuador	Juan Ocles Arce	Centro de Desarrollo y Equidad Racial en Ecuador CEDESTU	Representante	cedestuecuador@yahoo.es
9	El Salvador	Maritza Melara	Consultora en Derechos Humanos	Consultora	maritzamelara@yahoo.es
10	Mexico	Georgina Sandoval	Centro de Investigación y Asistencia en Tecnología y Diseño del Estado de Jalisco	Investigadora	gsandoval@ciatej.net.mx
11	Peru	Richard Mauricio Maquera Cutipa	Megainternet	Administrador	librafreejkm@hotmail.com
12	Peru	Felicia Anastacia Huarsaya Villasante	Coordinadora Agroforestal Indígena y Campesina del Perú (COICAP)	Presidente	quechuayllu@yahoo.es
13	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Rudi Daniel	Self Employed Consultant (DanielCharles)	Consultant	rudi.daniel@gmail.com
14	Trinidad and Tobago	Marva Ribeiro	Ministerio de Educación	Director de Programa	marva_ribeiro@yahoo.co.uk
15	Trinidad and Tobago	Abe Fergusson	Natural Disasters Youth Summit - iEARN TnT project	Youth Ambassador	afef10@hotmail.com
16	Trinidad and Tobago	Anil Ramdatt	Private Enterprise	Draughtsman	anilramdatt@yahoo.com
17	Uruguay	Mary Ingrid Gabrielzyk Kovalchuk	Docente	Universidad de la República	gabriko@adinet.com.uy
18	United States	Mark Lambrides	Department of Sustainable Development SEDI/OAS	Especialista en energía	mlambrides@oas.org
19	United States	Carolina Pena	Department of Sustainable Development SEDI/OAS	Especialista en energía	cpena@oas.org
20	United States	Juan Cruz Monticelli	Department of Sustainable Development SEDI/OAS	Especialista en energía	jmonticelli@oas.org

21	United States	Kevin de Cuba	Department of Sustainable Development SEDI/OAS	Especialista en energia	kdecuba@oas.org
22	United States	Christoph Tagwerker	Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) - SECCI	Consultant	christopht@iadb.org
23	OAS	Lina María Marmolejo	Moderator	Summits of the Americas Secretariat	lmarmolejo@hotmail.com
24	OAS	Claudia Salazar	Summits Virtual Platform Coordinator	Summits of the Americas Secretariat	csalazar@oas.org

C. Reference Documents

As the forum unfolded, numerous documents dealing with the topic were submitted. These included technical information, laws and regulations, links to sites of interest, and videos.

To access the list of documents and reference resources, [click here](#).