

Press Release
November 23, 2010
U.S. Embassy, Georgetown

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Opinion Editorial by US Embassy Charge d'Affaires Thomas Pierce

Around the world today, we are already seeing the damaging effects of climate change, from increasing temperatures and melting glaciers to rising sea levels and lengthening droughts. The toll on our planet will only get worse if the international community does not strengthen its efforts to address this problem. The upcoming United Nations climate conference in Mexico offers an opportunity to take an important step forward -- and we must seize this moment together.

The United States is committed to working with Guyana and our other international partners to meet this great global challenge.

At Cancun, we must work to build on the progress made last year in Copenhagen and move forward on all key elements of the negotiations—mitigation of emissions, transparency of actions, financing, adaptation, technology, and protection of our forests. As we press ahead on these issues and seek a balanced outcome, we must also avoid undermining what we achieved in Copenhagen, where leaders from around the world took a meaningful and unprecedented step in our collective commitment to meeting the climate change challenge. Attempts to back away from commitments in the Copenhagen Accord or to renegotiate its underpinning would only deepen the danger for our planet, our people and our future.

As part of the Copenhagen Accord – which is supported by approximately 140 countries, including Guyana – for the first time all major economies committed to take actions to limit their emissions and to do so in an internationally transparent manner. The agreement also includes landmark provisions for financial assistance to support clean technology development, adaptation, and forest protection in those countries most in need. These provisions consist of a pledge for “fast start” funding by developed countries approaching \$30 billion over the years 2010-2012 and a commitment to a goal of mobilizing \$100 billion annually from public and private sources by 2020 in the context of meaningful mitigation and transparency.

The United States is delivering on our fast start commitment to help developing countries reduce emissions and adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. This year alone, the United States has significantly increased its climate finance to a total of \$1.7 billion, \$1.3 billion of Congressionally-appropriated assistance and \$400 million of development finance and export credit.

The United States is also working hard to reduce its own emissions and transition to a clean energy economy. President Obama's Recovery Act provided more than \$80 billion in investments, loans and incentives to support a range of initiatives that are vital to this goal. We have put in place the most ambitious U.S. fuel economy and tailpipe emission standards ever. We are taking important steps to reduce emissions from our largest polluting sources. And President Obama remains committed to passing domestic energy and climate legislation.

As I travel throughout Guyana, I see broad concern about the current impacts and the potential threats of changing climate – concerns that Americans share. But I am encouraged by the actions that are being taken here and around the world to work toward a clean energy future that promotes sustainable economic growth for all. Just as no nation can escape the effects of climate change, no nation alone can solve this problem. Guyana has demonstrated its willingness to work with other nations to address climate change, especially through REDD+. Efforts to pursue economic development while avoiding deforestation and this country's desire to pursue clean energy should serve as an example to other developing countries.

The risks posed by climate change and the difficulty of containing it pose challenges to every country, and we must overcome those obstacles. Our global efforts to build a sustainable, clean energy economy will lift people out of poverty, deliver energy services throughout the world, and preserve our most precious environmental treasures. The Copenhagen Accord is, and the upcoming climate change meeting in Cancun should be, an important step in our collective commitment to speed this transition, leaving a cleaner, healthier planet for all.

###