

**Remarks by Ambassador Robert M. Orr
US Executive Director to ADB**

**Opening Plenary Session
Asia Clean Energy Forum 2011
Asian Development Bank Headquarters, Manila
June 22, 2011, 9:00-10:30 a.m.**

It was a pleasure and honor to be here.

I would like to thank our distinguished keynote speakers, Amory Lovins, Chairman of the Rocky Mountain Institute, and Mohamed El-Ashry, Senior Fellow at the United Nations Foundation and Chairman of the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century, for your attendance here. I am sure your insights will be much appreciated.

And thank you, also, to our co-sponsors, the Asian Development Bank, the US Agency for International Development, and World Resources Institute for organizing such an impressive program this year.

Friends and colleagues from government, the private sector, and civil society,

It is a great pleasure to be here on behalf of the US Government today to reaffirm our support for your important efforts.

This is now the fifth year that USAID has worked with ADB to sponsor the Asia Clean Energy Forum, and the event has really taken on a life of its own. When we started the collaboration back in 2007, we had a total of 350 participants. Last year, we had more than 550 participants from 45 countries, and this year we expect as many as 660 people to attend the clean energy events this week.

Building off of the successful Clean Energy Fora of prior years, this year's Forum signifies a new emphasis on innovative business models. This is an important opportunity to consider how we can harness the vast power of the market through smart business and financial decision-making, as well as craft the policies, incentives and regulations that can bring about a low carbon future.

Achieving low carbon development is both necessary and possible, but it will require our constant attention and a continual fine-tuning of our ideas and technology to push it forward. For this, we will need you.

This Forum is unique in how it brings together such a diverse range of knowledgeable and talented experts across disciplines, and it is rare to see so many new and promising ideas being discussed and shared across such a large geographic region all under one roof.

I am sure you all know how important clean energy is to President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton. So please, permit me to share some exciting developments the United States is working on, both domestically and in the Asia-Pacific region.

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Under the Obama administration, the US has been taking serious steps toward putting the country on a pathway to a clean energy future. The US is continuing to spend the \$80 billion provided in the 2009 stimulus plan to provide loans and incentives to transform the way the US produces and consumes energy. So far the US Government has made the largest single investment in home energy efficiency in US history, has provided enough incentives to double renewable energy generation by 2012, and is moving slowly towards overhauling much of the country's power

infrastructure through investments in smart grids and smart metering.¹

In his State of the Union Address to Congress in January, the President called for a new Clean Energy Standard for America: by 2035, 80 percent of US electricity would come from a wide range of clean energy sources—renewables like wind, solar, and efficient natural gas. He also committed to research and development on the safe and economic deployment of clean coal and nuclear power.

Steven Chu, the US Secretary of Energy, has stressed that innovation is the key to America's competitiveness, especially in the area of clean energy. In November of last year,² he described a number of Federally-funded research efforts now underway that are aimed at achieving game-changing technological breakthroughs—breakthrough that could potentially have a substantial impact in Asia and around the world.

One initiative involves a revolutionary so-called “metal-air” battery that would be capable of carrying a four passenger electric car 500 miles on a single charge—at a cost that's competitive with internal combustion engines. Another, led by Caltech, is using a process similar to photosynthesis to convert sunlight, carbon dioxide, and water directly into usable fuels such as gasoline.

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While many smart people continue to work toward the next big technological breakthrough, there is a lot we can do here today to address the challenges we face on the ground. We all have a lot to

¹ US Special Envoy for Climate Change Todd Stern, Speech to Brookings Institution, May 18, 2010.

² Speech at the National Press Club, 29 November 2010.

learn from each other, and the US Government is proud to be working in close partnership with countries across Asia to share new ideas and find better ways of growing our economies and increasing trade without imperiling our planet.

The US is coming at the clean energy challenge with a history of remarkable economic success. But like elsewhere, our growth relied heavily on fossil fuels. This has been changing in recent years as energy efficiency and renewable energy have greatly reduced the rate of emissions in the United States.

And not a moment too soon: world energy demand is projected to increase by 40 percent over the next 20 years, according to the International Energy Agency, and the main source of that growth is expected to be right here in Asia.³ Coal and oil currently make up 75 percent of the region's energy mix.⁴ Fortunately, Asian governments and businesses increasingly recognize the importance of clean energy in addressing both the region's need for energy and economic growth and the imperative of protecting its unique environment and biodiversity.

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I would like to briefly highlight a few initiatives that USAID and other US Government partners are supporting to help build this clean energy future:

- Through its ECO-Asia Clean Development and Climate Program, USAID has been working with the Climate Technology Initiative on the Private Financing Advisory

³ http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/environment/climate/policies_prog/clean_energy.html

⁴ ADB, Energy Outlook for Asia and the Pacific (2010), based on IEA, APERC, World Bank, and 2008 values from International Energy Agency website: http://iea.org/country/index_nmc.asp

Network (PFAN) here in Asia. Since April 2009, PFAN-Asia has helped finance 21 clean energy projects and businesses valued at \$275 million in the Philippines, China, Indonesia, India, Cambodia, and Thailand. Combined, the projects will provide 138 MW of power and have the same effect in reducing emissions as taking more than 2 million cars off the road for an entire year.

- Over the last ten years, USAID's South Asia Regional Initiative for Energy has made significant strides in energy security cooperation in South Asia. Recently this initiative played an instrumental role in establishing new cross-border power trade agreements between India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, and in establishing new Centers of Excellence including a regional lighting center in Colombo, the Women's Institute for Sustainable Energy Research in Kerala, and a regional center for micro-hydro in Kathmandu.
- In the Philippines, USAID continues to work with the government to achieve the goal of 90 percent household electrification by 2017. So far more than 14,000 households in Mindanao have been provided basic electricity services through new solar and micro-hydro generation. USAID also supported the enactment of landmark legislation to accelerate clean energy development in the Philippines including the Biofuels Law and the Renewable Energy Act.
- USAID's brand new Indonesia Clean Energy Development program will assist the Government of Indonesia in removing barriers to the development of clean energy and ultimately increase access to clean energy for 1.2 million people, support the installation of 120 megawatts of new clean energy, and leverage at least \$120 million in public and private funding.

- USAID has also helped establish a State Energy Conservation Fund in the State of Kerala in India, and has worked with Hebei Province in China on a large industrial energy efficiency strategy through a Super Energy Services Company (SuperESCO). In fact, the Hebei project is in the process of finalizing arrangements for an ADB loan to establish a large revolving fund for industrial energy efficiency projects.
- Working with a consortium of corporate partners, USAID's green building programs in China have trained the industrial and building managers of some 8,000 buildings in 10 of China's largest cities on low- and no-cost improvements that have cut greenhouse gas emissions there by upwards of 10 percent in recent years.
- The US is also working with both China and India on joint research on new clean energy technologies, green buildings, industrial and commercial energy efficiency, and cooperation on low carbon cities.

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These are just some examples of work the U.S. has been involved with, and I look forward to hearing about the many other efforts you are all part of now. We have been making a great deal of progress together, and we have enormous potential for continuing and deepening our partnerships.

While every era of human development has been marked by change, the speed at which technology is driving change today is without precedent in human history. So, too, is the potential for this change to be either positive or negative.

The road ahead is not clear.

Business as usual is no longer an option. Earth's climate is changing, probably more rapidly than many people think, and this is having a profound effect on every country in the world.

That is why international conferences like this are more important than ever. It is leaders, experts like you, who can help make the changes in our societies so that a clean, green future can become reality. No nation has a monopoly on good ideas. We need every country to think more seriously about energy use and to work more closely than ever to find solutions. I do not think I am being overly dramatic when I say that the stakes are high. Our common humanity may depend on our success.

Thank you and my best wishes for a very successful conference.