



“Policy Dialogue on Climate Change: Challenges and Opportunities for the Americas”

Washington DC, June 17, 2014

In the framework of the Fifty-Ninth Policy Roundtable of the Organization of American States (OAS), the Secretariat for External Relations and the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development organized the “Policy Dialogue on Climate Change: Challenges and Opportunities for the Americas.” This Roundtable took place in the Main Building of the OAS in Washington DC, United States on June 17, 2014.

The Chief of Staff of the General Secretariat of the OAS, Hugo de Zela delivered the opening remarks of the event.

Next, the Co-Chair of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Vicente Barros provided comments on "Climate Change in the Americas: IPCC V Report, Assessment of Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability." Ambassador Juan Federico Jimenez Mayor, Permanent Representative of Peru to the OAS, spoke on the topic "From Science to Policy: Good Climate Governance for the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals". Afterwards, Ambassador Barney Karran, Permanent Representative of Guyana to the OAS, gave a presentation on "Climate Change and the Post 2015 Development Agenda: A Caribbean Perspective."

Finally, a Dialogue was conducted by Max Campos, Chief of the Integrated Water Resources Management Section of the Department of Sustainable Development of the OAS and member of the IPCC, and Claudia S. de Windt, Chief of the Environmental Law, Policy and Good Governance Section of the Department of Sustainable Development of the OAS, with the participation of the following experts:

- Omar Ramirez Tejada, Executive Vice-President, National Council on Climate Change, Dominican Republic
- Cletus Springer, Director, Department of Sustainable Development, OAS
- Cecilia Conde, Director of Climate Change Research, Mexican Institute of Ecology and Climate Change and Member of the IPCC

The closing remarks were provided by Ambassador Jean Claude Nolla, Permanent Observer of France to the OAS.



OBJECTIVE OF THE ROUNDTABLE

The objectives of the Roundtable were twofold: (1) to present the results of the latest report of the IPCC and the links with the need to establish strategic alliances and reduce extreme poverty; and (2) to identify areas and possible solutions to the climate change challenge in the hemisphere.

RESULTS AND KEY MESSAGES

1. Climate change is no longer a specialized topic of discussion for those working in sectors related to environmental issues; it has become a discussion that involves all sectors, including the economy, social inclusion, and human rights.
2. Since 1950, there has been an increase in temperature of the continents and oceans, as well as a reduction of glaciers, due to Climate Change.
3. Risk Management should be the central topic on Climate Change discussions.
4. There are 120 observed impacts to human and biological systems that are directly linked to Climate Change; approximately 15 of those are attributed to the Latin America region.
5. Studying the impacts of Climate Change is challenging since the effects are more evident at the local level, but the climate measurement models are global, making it difficult to determine if the climate in a specific place has changed as a result of climate change.
6. The approach to adaptation should be Assessment and Risk Management. There are three factors of uncertainty: greenhouse gas emissions; inaccurate climate models, especially when applied at regional level; and climate variability.
7. The social conflicts can be aggravated as a consequence of Climate Change due the competition for the limited resources and the lack of public health and food safety.
8. It is necessary to have an integrated approach to determine the most appropriate measures of adaptation for each country and for each sector.
9. The effects of Climate Change on agriculture are very noticeable; for instance, in Latin America cereals show a decrease in production, particularly in corn and wheat; so it is necessary to take measures to counter this situation.

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10. As Climate Change increases, the magnitude of the impacts will be more severe and harmful; therefore, the negative impact on several animal species should be a particular concern.
 11. There is a shift of certain marine species to higher latitudes; food production has also been affected by Climate Change.
 12. Frequent monitoring of actions and measures for climate change adaptation is necessary since conditions are constantly changing and there are many influencing factors.
 13. Developing countries are the most affected by the impacts of Climate Change; notwithstanding their minimal contribution to greenhouse gas emissions.
 14. There is a lack of clarity on funding provided by developed countries or the Green Climate Fund for actions against Climate Change.
 15. In the Americas, only United States is one of the top countries emitting more greenhouse gases; Latin America and the Caribbean together only contribute to 12% of the planet emissions, of which only 0.5% is attributed to Central America and the Caribbean. Therefore, there is a great asymmetry on emissions generation that complicates negotiations since these are based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibility.
 16. Countries have made great efforts to improve public transportation systems, resulting in greenhouse gases mitigation and promotion of alternative energies.
 17. Climate Change has consequences on the supply of water and energy, particularly in countries with weak political systems. Climate Change has also increased extreme natural conditions affecting people and countries.
 18. Finance management is key to actions against Climate Change impacts.
 19. Climate Change must be one of the most important topics and one of the biggest challenges not only for development and poverty eradication but also for the survival of Caribbean Islands in the long term.
 20. IPCC reports that the Caribbean Islands are particularly vulnerable to Climate Change impacts, especially to the increase of the sea level due to the raise of temperatures.
 21. According to World Bank estimates, for 2018 the annual economic damage generated by Climate Change in the Caribbean will be 11.3% of



GDP of all Caribbean countries. The effects caused by Climate Change impacts will affect the industries of each country and consequently the capital income.

22. CARICOM countries have committed to develop collective actions to combat Climate Change.
23. The Caribbean seas are very important for the economy and the development of the islands, and have a major role in food production, transport, tourism and recreation. However, three problems have been identified that threaten life in the seas and therefore the people of Caribbean islands: warming and acidification of waters, and the reduction of dissolved oxygen; as a result, a large number of dead marine species have died.
24. According to a report produced by the IUCN in 2008, due to hurricanes and the increase of sea temperature there is a devastation of nearly half of the coral reefs in the Caribbean Islands, which also affects marine life in the region.
25. To solve some of the Climate Change issues in the Caribbean islands it is necessary to develop partnerships alliances between the Caribbean countries and the international community.
26. Governments have begun to develop policies and adaptation plans that integrate Climate Change considerations.
27. Science and the development of technologies will provide new alternatives for informed decision-making.
28. Public policies for sustainable development should supported by the public to achieve a proper adaptation to Climate Change and its impacts.
29. Actions to mitigate and adapt the Climate Change must be considered to achieve sustainable development and must be included in the Post 2015 Development Agenda framework.
30. The only legally-binding instrument on Climate Change is the Kyoto Protocol. During the COP 21 an agreement is expected that will come into force on 2020, which would become the replacement for the Kyoto Protocol.
31. Citizen participation is important as means to fulfill adaptation and mitigation goals on Climate Change. The OAS has an important role to encourage citizen participation through the “Inter-American Strategy to Promote Public Participation in Decision-Making on Sustainable

Development.” Women and youth participation is of great importance and impact for the region.

32. Basing political decisions with scientific evidence becomes necessary at the local, regional and international levels; so the scientific community should be working together with policy-makers, particularly thinking about the future generations.
33. Climate Change should be proposed as a central issue in the OAS agenda.
34. The OAS has various mechanisms to encourage the exchange of experiences that can provide regional support to finding solutions for Climate Change, including Inter-American networks of biodiversity, disaster risk management, water resources management, environmental law, institutional strengthening and training programs. The OAS also has a political platform for decision-making including ministerial meetings and the Inter-American Commission for Sustainable Development that will be reactivated.
35. The new agreement to be proposed in the upcoming sessions of the COP should have a Section of Loss and Damages; this would be a compensation mechanism which includes aspects of Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES).
36. The OAS has a responsibility, as the organ that unites the entire American continent, to promote countries to work for a common goal, to encourage discussion and to propose solutions to the problems in the hemisphere.

During his closing remarks, Ambassador Jean Claude Nolla, Permanent Observer of France to the OAS, mentioned that the Climate Change debate includes mitigation, adaptation and opportunities; and emphasized that since Climate Change is a global issue, it is necessary that each country looks for solutions with global impact.

MEDIA

- OAS, June 17, 2014:
 - Article name: OAS Roundtable discuss on the challenges and opportunities for the policy dialogue against climate change.
 - Web:
http://www.oas.org/en/media_center/press_release.asp?sCodigo=E-262/14
- Panama On, June 19, 2014

- Article name: OAS Roundtable discuss on the challenges and opportunities for the policy dialogue against climate change.

- Web:

- <http://www.panamaon.com/noticias/politica/1147885-mesa-redonda-de-la-oea-debatio-sobre-los-desafios-y-las-oportunidades-del-dialogo-politico-frente-al-cambio-climatico.html>

- National Institute of Ecology and Climate Change, Mexico, June 17, 2014.

- Article name: OAS Roundtable discuss about the challenges and opportunities of policy dialogue on Climate Change.

- Web:

- http://www.inecc.gob.mx/descargas/dgioece/2014_mesa_oea_ddodpcc_con_de.pdf

- Climate Change, Chile, June 19, 2014

- Article name: COP 20 agreement will provide the basis for global negotiations.

- Web:

- http://www.cambioclimaticochoile.cl/ver_noticia.php?idnoticia=1209