

# DEPARTMENT OF STATE CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERIC PROGRAMS

The Department of State (DOS) plays an active role in international climate/meteorological policy making as a result of the growing worldwide concern with global environmental issues, including the depletion of the stratospheric ozone layer and climate change. The role of DOS has principally revolved around preparation and negotiation of the United States position in three fora: (1) the Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention and its Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, (2) the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC); and (3) negotiation under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC). In addition, over the past few years the DOS has played a central and active role in the development and implementation of a number of international science and technology initiatives including the Group on Earth Observations, the Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum, the International Partnership for the Hydrogen Economy, the Methane-to-Markets Partnership, and Generation IV (a U.S.-led program working on new fission reactor designs that will be safer, more economical and secure).



Stratospheric ozone depletion has been recognized as a critical health and environmental problem for more than two decades. Under DOS leadership, the United States worked to negotiate international agreements to phase out ozone-depleting substances, which should lead to a recovery of the ozone layer in this middle of this century. To date, these treaties have been signed and ratified by more than 193 countries, including the United States. These countries represent 99 percent of the world's production of ozone depleting substances. The State Department makes annual contributions to the Vienna Convention's efforts on scientific monitoring of the ozone layer.

The IPCC, which was established by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), held its first session in 1988. This organization serves as a government forum to assess scientific, technical and socio-economic information relevant for the understanding of climate change, its potential impacts and options for adaptation and mitigation. In doing so, the Panel draws on the expertise of thousands of scientists and technical experts. The IPCC is currently organized into three working groups, which examine (1) the state of the science, (2) impacts and adaptation, and (3) mitigation. In addition to preparing assessment reports, the IPCC also contributes to international negotiations through preparation and review of special reports and development of meth-

odologies requested by the UNFCCC.

The UNFCCC was negotiated beginning in February 1991 and the Convention was open for signature in Rio de Janeiro at the Earth Summit in June 1992. As of May 2004, it had been ratified by 189 countries, including the U.S.. The ultimate objective of the Framework Convention is to stabilize greenhouse gas emissions at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic (human induced) interference with the climate system. It states that such a level should be achieved within a timeframe sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened, and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner.

In December 2007 at the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC, the United States agreed to the Bali Action Plan which was the start of a two year negotiation toward a new long term climate arrangement for the post 2012 era. As an adjunct to the UN process, the United States and sixteen other major economies responsible for roughly 80% of the world's economic activity and 80% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions founded the "Major Economies Process on Energy Security and Climate Change" (MEM). They have met in Washington, Honolulu, Paris, Seoul, and Lake Toyado, Japan, with more meetings planned for 2009 before the Copenhagen COP in December of that year.

Another multilateral effort is the Asia-Pacific

Partnership on Clean Development and Climate (APP). The seven countries that make up the Partnership – Australia, Canada, China, India, Republic of Korea, Japan, and the United States – are focused on clean development projects in partner countries. To date over 115 projects have been endorsed by the APP since January 2006. The US APP Program office in DOS has funded roughly \$13 million worth of clean development projects in India and China to date.

In the context of meteorological and climate monitoring, as well as mitigating greenhouse gases and related impacts, DOS together with strong participation from USDA, DOE and other US government (USG) agencies, organized the Washington International Renewable Energy Conference (WIREC) in March, 2008. As the third international ministerial-level event on renewable energy, the conference drew over 3000 participants, with an additional 6000 attending the trade show and related events. Notably, the Ministerial Meeting at WIREC brought together 103 ministers representing energy, economic and scientific sectors of governments. In response to the call issued by the conference organizers, participants submitted over 140 pledge commitments related to implementation of renewable energy on behalf of organizations ranging from governments to civil society to the private sector. USG contributions

include a total of 31 pledges made by 14 agencies, including DOS commitments anchored in the Asia-Pacific Partnership initiative.

Together these initiatives help our global capability to understand and address issues associated with climate change in a manner that supports broader sustainable development goals. In addition to its primary role in the fora listed above, DOS is active in several relevant interagency processes, including the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources (CENR) of the National Science and Technology Council, the Climate Change Science Program (CCSP) and its Interagency Working Group on Climate Change Science and Technology (IWGCCST). The CENR was established in 1993 to coordinate scientific domestic programs. CCSP was created in 2001 to “integrate federal research on global change and climate change” across thirteen federal agencies and is the umbrella to IWGCCST which was founded in 2002 and is a sub-Cabinet level group that reviews all programs that contribute to climate change science and technology.

In addition to the above, DOS responsibilities include, but are not limited to, international aspects of food policy, disaster warnings and assistance, WMO and UNEP activities, and international meteorological programs.