



NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

July 14, 2009

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
US Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Re: Strengthening US-India cooperation on climate change and energy

Dear Secretary Clinton:

I am writing on behalf of the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) to urge you to focus on the critical need for increased cooperation between the US and India on climate change during your upcoming visit to India. NRDC would be happy to provide whatever assistance we can in this important effort.

Having just launched an NRDC initiative on India, we were very encouraged by your recent speech at the US-India Business Council Summit in which you emphasized the importance of enhancing collaboration on clean energy and climate. As you recognize, India is an essential partner in any global effort to stabilize the climate and promote sustainable development. We believe that your trip provides a singular opportunity to break the gridlock in international climate negotiations and to move toward stronger cooperation between our countries.

Currently, India has the second-fastest growing economy in the world, and is the world's fourth-largest emitter of greenhouse gases. Yet, more than 400 million Indians lack access to electricity. The middle-class is projected to grow from 50 million today to over 500 million by 2025. Energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions could skyrocket. Between 1990 and 2005 India's carbon dioxide emissions grew by 65 percent, and they are projected to increase by 70 percent by 2020 under a business-as-usual scenario.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that India is already taking significant domestic measures to constrain its emissions. Last year, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh released The National Action Plan on Climate Change, outlining eight core national missions through 2017. For example, the plan sets an ambitious target of 200,000 MW of installed solar capacity by mid-century – which would make India a world leader in solar power. Similarly, India's Bureau of Energy Efficiency has adopted policies including an Energy Conservation Building Code that will reduce India's greenhouse gas emissions 20 percent by 2021 as compared to a business-as-usual trajectory.

With support from the US Agency for International Development, the Indian government has launched programs that improve energy efficiency in existing buildings and new municipal buildings. The Asia Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate has also implemented innovative projects in India such as demand side management and renewable energy entrepreneurship. State governments have also taken significant steps, such as Himachal Pradesh and Haryana's programs to distribute free compact fluorescent lights to their residents. In addition, India has completed ten new LEED platinum buildings this year and has plans for over 1000 certified-green buildings by 2012.

Business associations and civil society organizations are also actively encouraging a lower-carbon future in India. The Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) has issued a report, "Building a Low-Carbon Indian Economy," which recommends implementation of domestic measures that would reduce India's greenhouse gas emissions 27 percent below business-as-usual projections by 2030. CII's Green Building Centre was also the first LEED platinum building outside of the US and continues to promote advancements in green building materials. The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) recently launched Light Up a Billion Lives, a village-based solar lantern program. The non-profit Development Alternatives promotes innovative biofuels projects to provide electricity to villages. Overall clean energy investment in India increased to \$3.7 billion in 2008 with a 12 percent growth from 2007. These sustainable energy investments will also provide more reliable energy services for multinational information technology companies operating in India.

Indian youth are also increasingly concerned about climate change. While you are in New Delhi, we hope you and Special Envoy Todd Stern will have the opportunity to meet with hundreds of young Indian leaders who will gather for the Indian Youth Climate Network's summit, "Badlaav 2009 – Be the Change." These young leaders will provide the imagination and political will to move India forward as a valued partner in the future.

We have great hope that your trip will further expand US and India collaboration on climate change and sustainable energy. There are numerous opportunities for collaboration that can be discussed during your visit, such as:

Support policy and technical collaboration for key missions identified in India's National Action Plan on Climate Change. The key missions include: solar energy power generation; enhanced energy efficiency for all sectors and promoting demand side management; energy efficient urban planning focused on public transportation; water efficiency projects; Himalayan ecosystem protection; sustainable agriculture; and strategic knowledge regarding climate change.

Expand and intensify the US-India energy dialogue. Currently, the US-India renewable energy working group has met only once. Expanded discussions on energy efficiency, demand side management, and clean energy are critical to building a sustainable energy future.

Renew and increase funding for USAID's Energy Conservation and Commercialization (ECO-III) program. Through ECO-III many successful energy efficiency projects have been launched in India, including registered LEED green buildings and state implementation of the

Energy Conservation Building Code. Although funding for the ECO-III program has been considerably reduced, renewed investment in ECO-III and/or successor programs are essential to promote low-carbon growth and international technology and funding transfers.

Address energy poverty through deployment of energy efficiency and renewable technology. Black carbon, a component of soot emitted by wood-burning cook stoves and diesel fuel, is a major contributor to climate change globally and constitutes a substantial portion of India's global warming pollution. The wood-diesel fuel mix also drives deforestation and results in severe air pollution, especially for the rural and urban poor. Similarly, these at-risk populations are disproportionately affected by both water and energy shortages resulting from inefficient supply systems. Programs such as USAID's water/energy projects should be expanded and include efforts to reduce black carbon, a low-hanging fruit mitigation measure.

Cooperate with India to build its climate change institutional capacity. The US should begin now to help build institutional capacity in India to utilize effectively anticipated increases in technology transfer and international financing for climate change mitigation and adaption after the Copenhagen conference. There is an identifiable need to assist the development of measurable baseline emissions and the impact upon emissions from policy measures in India. There is also need for greater cooperation on developing innovative technologies, such as integrated photovoltaic systems, ground source heat pumps, indirect/direct evaporated cooling, and energy efficient data centers. In addition, increased cooperation on science and policy focused on climate health and adaptation to climate impacts are needed given that India's poor are anticipated to be among the hardest hit by projected global warming effects. For example, the US Geological Survey is a leader in mapping and monitoring water scarce resources and could share expertise with Indian hydrologists to identify populations vulnerable to climate change impacts.

The time is ripe for a transformation of US-India cooperation on climate and clean energy. Inspired action now will put us on a path to safer, healthier world filled with greater economic and human development opportunities. All of us working on NRDC's India Initiative will be following your visit to India very closely. We are looking forward to working with you and the Obama Administration on securing stronger cooperation between our country and India on fighting global warming.

Sincerely,



Peter Lehner
Executive Director
Natural Resources Defense Council

cc: Todd Stern, Special Envoy on Climate Change