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Inputs to the Delhi Declaration

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Remarks to the Eighth Session of the Conference of Parties (COP-8) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

New Delhi, India, October 25, 2002

Mr. President, I first want to express the United States' deepest gratitude to the people and the Government of India for their generous hospitality and excellent arrangements made for COP-8. I also want to congratulate you on your election as President of COP-8 and to pay you the highest compliment on your conduct of the meetings to date, and particularly for the open and transparent way you are conducting the consultations on the Delhi Declaration.

I want to endorse the general remarks made by the distinguished delegate of Australia on behalf of the Umbrella Group. However, I do want to elaborate further the specific views of the United States with respect to possible Delhi Declaration elements addressing adaptation and sustainable development.

First, we believe that the Delhi Declaration should welcome the increased focus in the UNFCCC on adaptation. Effective, results-based adaptation strategies will be a key component, along with mitigation policies, of an effective climate change strategy for both developing and developed countries.

Second, we believe that the Delhi Declaration should highlight the importance of addressing climate change in the broader context of sustainable development.

The year 2002 will be remembered as an historic one in our universal quest for sustainable development. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, which built upon outcomes achieved earlier this year at Monterrey and Doha, we reaffirmed our commitment to sustainable development in the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development.

In Johannesburg, we also all agreed to a Plan of Implementation that recognized that "Good governance within each country and the international level is essential for sustainable development. At the domestic level, sound environmental, social and economic policies, democratic institutions responsible to the needs of the people, the rule of law, anti-corruption measures, gender equality and an enabling environment for investment are the basis for sustainable development." And also that "Eradicating poverty is the greatest global challenge for sustainable development, particularly for developing countries."

And, in Johannesburg, we again agreed that "Change in the Earth's climate and its adverse effects are common concern of humankind. We remain deeply concerned that all countries, particularly developing countries including the least developed countries and small island developing States, face increased negative impacts of climate change

and recognize that, in this context, the problems of poverty, land degradation, access to water and food and human health remain at the centre of local attention."

It is then, in this broader context that we see our efforts to address climate change. Both climate change and sustainable development are complex, long-term challenges that will require sustained commitment and focus on the part of the nations of the world. Our choice of approaches to address climate change, if they are to be effective in the long run, must recognize that the hope of growth and opportunity and prosperity is universal -- that it is the dream and right of every society on our globe. And we must also recognize that it would be unfair -- indeed, counterproductive -- to condemn developing nations to slow growth or no growth by insisting that they take on impractical and unrealistic greenhouse gas targets.

The United States is committed to a sustainable climate change policy -- one that is based on the common-sense idea that economic growth is key to environmental progress, because it is growth that provides the resources for investment in clean technologies. We are also working to foster technological advances through research and development, investing in institutions and initiating public-private partnerships that will promote sustainable development and climate change policy.

We believe this is an approach that will harness the power of markets, the creativity of entrepreneurs, and draw upon the best scientific research -- one that will make possible a new partnership with the developing world to meet our common environmental and economic goals.

While the United States has chosen a different approach than many countries in our choice of actions to address climate change, we would suggest that our broader goal -- to achieve the objective of the Convention over time in a manner that supports and reinforces our broader commitment to our citizens' well being -- is shared by most. Indeed, how we can best work collectively to achieve this broader goal is the major challenge for us all.

Mr. President, New Delhi represents another important opportunity in this year of world attention on sustainable development. By highlighting the importance of addressing climate change in the broader context of sustainable development, the Delhi Declaration can provide a much-needed focus to our future work and to our combined efforts to address climate change.

Thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to express our views on this important matter. [End]Released on October 29, 2002

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