

Chairman Dingell, Subcommittee on Energy and Air Quality Hearing Entitled "Climate Change: International Issues, Engaging Developing

Statement of Congressman John D. Dingell, Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND AIR QUALITY HEARING ENTITLED "CLIMATE CHANGE: INTERNATIONAL ISSUES,
ENGAGING DEVELOPING COUNTRIES"
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Today's hearing focuses on a very important issue, one which has percolated through every other hearing in the Subcommittee's series on climate change: the contribution of developing countries to the growth in greenhouse gas concentrations, and their potential role in mitigating this environmental threat.

It is widely understood that, without commitments from both developed and developing Nations to limit greenhouse gas emissions, this global environmental problem cannot be addressed. It also is broadly accepted that, absent a major effort on the part of the United States, large developing countries, such as China and India, are not likely to significantly limit their own rising emission levels.

What is less clear is how to coordinate the two. Some witnesses at prior hearings have argued that the United States has a moral and practical imperative to act unilaterally to limit its emissions: whether or not developing countries act in parallel within the same time period. A number of witnesses predicted that if the U.S. leads, developing countries are likely to follow suit.

Other witnesses, however, argued that it would be foolhardy for the U.S. to bind itself unilaterally to emission limits and that doing so would cause both jobs and emissions to migrate to the developing world, thereby harming the U.S. economy without securing real reductions in global emissions.

My sense is that people of good conscience are looking for a practical solution to this dilemma. I was skeptical of the Kyoto Protocol, because, to my mind, it did not strike a fair or effective balance between developed and developing Nations. I hope that the current U.N. negotiations will produce a more workable approach for the post-Kyoto era.

In its legislative considerations, Congress must find ways to limit emissions from the U.S. that do not amount to simply shifting their origin: and American jobs - to other countries. The Subcommittee has heard anecdotal evidence of a new openness in China and other developing Nations to cleaner paths to economic growth. I hope today's hearing will help members gain a better understanding of what changes are underway in major developing countries, and how the U.S. might align its efforts with theirs to mutually address this growing environmental concern.

I thank the Chairman for holding this hearing and look forward to the testimony of the witnesses here today.

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Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515