

## **Environmentally Effective, Economically Sustainable**

**By Ambassador Yousif B. Ghafari**

This month's UN climate change conference in Poznan marks the mid-way point of the Action Plan agreed at Bali in December 2007 by Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. We believe it will be a key step toward the shared goal of an environmentally effective, economically sustainable global climate architecture, with all major economies as participants.

The United States is committed to taking a leadership role in developing a new global response to climate change. The past year has been a productive one, featuring three interim meetings under the UN Framework Convention as well as an unprecedented Major Economies Leaders Meeting on Energy Security and Climate Change, featuring heads of state and government from seventeen countries, including Slovenia during its Presidency of the EU Council. The Major Economies represent about 80% of the world's energy use, economic output, and greenhouse gas emissions. In Poznan, our highest priority will be to build on these discussions and set the stage for an effective outcome in 2009. We hope that Poznan can produce a deeper understanding of priorities and expectations. Concretely, we hope to agree to a practical work plan that will guide the transition into a negotiating agenda for the road to an agreement at Copenhagen in December 2009. We look forward to working with our European partners in this vital endeavor.

The questions under discussion at Poznan highlight the importance of research and development in clean energy technology. To effectively address climate change, we need nothing less than a clean energy technology revolution. The United States has been working with Europe and others around the world to increase trade and investment in clean energy technologies. Cooperation between the United States and Europe is essential for reaching our goals. For example, we are working with the European Union to develop carbon capture and storage technology.

Slovenia is also involved in the global effort to search for solutions. During Slovenia's Presidency of the European Union, the United States and Slovenia worked closely together at multiple Major Economies Meetings. As recently as September, Slovenia showed its commitment to addressing the issues of climate change and energy security by hosting the Bled Strategic Forum. Concurrent with the Poznan meeting this month, members of Slovenia's business communities will host a presentation by former US vice president on Al Gore on climate change, demonstrating the strong interest from not only the public sector but also private sector on environmental issues.

The US Embassy also regularly collaborates with local organizations working in the fields of environmental protection and energy security. Within the last year we have

provided grants to promote energy efficiency in buildings across Slovenia and to educate youth about climate change and renewable energies. We also maintain expert-level dialogues through visiting speakers and exchange programs.

The U.S. has made significant progress towards an environmentally effective yet economically sustainable approach to climate change. Between 2000 and 2006, net U.S. greenhouse gas emissions decreased by three percent while the United States economy grew by \$1.5 trillion – more than the GDP of France -- and the population increased by more than 17 million people – equal to the combined population of Austria and Sweden.

A green technology revolution demands government incentives, public-private partnerships, and a positive investment climate to attract private investment capital, the source of so much innovation in high technology. Since 2001, the United States has spent \$45 billion on programs to advance science and technology related to climate change. In the last eight years, the U.S. government has spent more than \$18 billion at home to research, develop, and promote clean energy sources. In addition, we have set aside \$67.5 billion in loan guarantee authority available for technologies that promote the deployment of clean energy technology, including clean coal, renewable, nuclear energy, grid, and other advanced technologies.

One example of public-private partnership in the United States is the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Climate Leaders program. Launched in 2002, *Climate Leaders* is an industry-government partnership that has provided guidance and recognition to American companies to help them develop and implement comprehensive climate change strategies. EPA works with over 230 leading corporations to lower their green house gas emissions through innovative technology and efficiency solutions such as powering factories with landfill gas and the installation of roof-top solar panels.

U.S. states and localities are also playing a key role in clean technology investment. As of the end of 2007, Texas, California, Minnesota, Iowa, and Washington produced 10,510 megawatts of wind power, which was 11% of total global wind power generation.

As demonstrated by our commitment to both domestic investment and cooperation with international partners, technology is an essential tool for responding to the challenge of global climate change in a way that can help, not hurt, our economies, despite the current economic challenges that we all face. As the world gathers in Poznan, we look forward to establishing an objective work plan that will inform the negotiations for an environmentally effective, economically sustainable agreement next year in Copenhagen.