

Ecosystem conservation should be at the forefront of global efforts to solve the climate crisis, says United States Deputy Special Envoy for Climate Change, Jonathan Pershing.

Climate change is a clear and present danger that demands urgent action. Rising concentrations of greenhouse gas pollution are already taking their toll on biodiversity, natural ecosystems and the people that depend on them. In 2007, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change catalogued significant physical and biological changes consistent with warming on all seven continents and in marine, freshwater and terrestrial environments. Our most vulnerable

pathway to a clean energy economy. The administration has called for drastic reductions in US carbon emissions—80% below 1990 levels by 2050—and the US Congress is making important progress on comprehensive legislation that sparks a clean energy transformation in our economy and makes possible the creation of new jobs. The US is also taking other steps that will yield the double dividend of growing our economy while protecting our environment. These include strong

US case, such efforts will lead to robust new growth in clean and sustainable economies while reducing the risks of devastating climate change.

One necessary component of any global solution to climate change is a comprehensive plan to reduce deforestation which accounts for approximately 20% of global emissions. The United States underscores its commitment to forest conservation and sustainable management through initiatives such as the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, through which US investments of more than US\$ 100 million since 2002 have helped to train thousands of conservation managers, create an unprecedented State of the Forest report that brings the best of science and research in the region to light and put nearly 48 million hectares of tropical forest—an area the size of California—under improved management planning.

An international climate solution must also galvanize support for helping vulnerable countries prepare for and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Unfortunately, in many cases the countries that have contributed the

—A natural solution



environments—including drylands, coastal regions, mountain ecosystems and coral reefs—already show significant climate change impacts. These changes will only become more severe in the coming decades unless international action is taken to solve the climate crisis.

An effective response to climate change is a prerequisite for successful protection of many ecosystems, the species that depend on them, and the services they provide for human sustainability. In order to be effective, this response must be global and immediate. It must include ambitious efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as strategies to improve ecosystem resilience to ongoing changes in climate.

The United States, under the leadership of President Obama, is taking robust action to combat climate change and to chart a

improvements in fuel efficiency for cars and trucks and a commitment of over US\$ 80 billion in the economic recovery package for clean energy investments, loan guarantees and tax credits.

The climate crisis is a global problem and it demands a truly global solution. The United States is working actively to achieve a strong international agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. To advance these negotiations, the US is engaging partners at the highest levels of government through the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate. Success, however, will require all countries, developed and developing, large and small, to participate. A concerted effort will be needed to reduce global emissions by 50% or more by 2050, and much further over the rest of the century. As in the