

WIREC Update – Wednesday, March 5, 2008

Day two of the Washington International Renewable Energy Conference (WIREC 2008) was highlighted by a visit from President George W. Bush, who toured the trade show floor before giving remarks to ministerial delegates. (Read his remarks [here](#)).

President Bush laid out the U.S. strategy for reducing oil use in America, and discussed current initiatives to increase energy efficiency and renewable energy use. After acknowledging that every nation would take a different path to increase renewable energy, the President called for an international agreement to slow, stop, and eventually reverse the growth of greenhouse gases. He also announced the U.S. commitment of \$2 billion over the next three years to create an international clean energy technology fund that would help developing countries finance renewable energy projects. (Read about the U.S. effort to increase energy security and mitigate climate change [here](#)).

Wednesday marked the beginning of the plenary sessions on the conference focal themes. Gregory Manuel, Special Assistant to the Secretary of State, and Andy Karsner, Assistant Secretary for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, led the panel on Market Adoption and Finance.

Tom Dorr, Under Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development, moderated the session on Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Development. Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Chuck Conner discussed the U.S. efforts in research and development of biofuels, while Marcos Jank of the Brazilian Sugar Cane Industry Association argued the importance of free trade in biofuels.

Peter Robertson, Vice Chairman of Chevron Corporation, kicked off the plenary on Research and Development. Meanwhile, the sessions for State and Local Authorities enjoyed strong participation from more than 250 representatives from state, local, and regional governments.

At the close of the day, the Washington International Action Program—the collection of pledges to drive up renewable energy—had collected more than 80 pledges from over 40 nations and other entities. New Zealand set an ambitious goal of producing 90 % of their electricity from renewables by 2025, while the Council of the European Union pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by a minimum of a 20% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. [Highlights of Pledges Received are available here](#). Visit our partners at [REN 21](#) to see a complete list of approved pledges.