

Democratic Forum on Climate change, November 19th 2015

Statement by B. FULDA, Embassy of France, Counselor for Ecology, Sustainable Development, Energy and Transport.

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Congressman Tonko and other distinguished members of the Energy and Commerce Committee and House Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition,
Ambassadors,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very honored to be here today as the representative of the French Embassy at the Democratic forum on climate change. First, on behalf of our Ambassador, Gérard Araud, please allow me to express our profound gratitude for the outpouring of sympathy and support we received from the American people, following the horrific attacks Paris experienced last Friday.

Energy & Commerce Ranking Member Congressman Frank Pallone recently stated: “Just saying no to climate action and condemning future generations is simply not an option.” We could not be more in agreement. When we act against climate change, we definitely are thinking about our children, and their children.

I would like to focus my remarks of today on some logistical aspects of the COP21, to give you a sense of **what will concretely happen in Paris and the conference venue, Le Bourget, between November 30-December 11.**

France was honored to be chosen as the host country for the 21st conference of the parties of the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21).

France has been working with the UN and Peru for more than a year in preparation of this conference.

COP21 will take place at Le Bourget, which is an airport north of Paris, halfway between CDG airport and the City of Paris. [Some of you may know that Le Bourget hosts every two years the Paris Air Show, the biggest Air show in the world].

A conference center has been specially built at Le Bourget, and it is organized in three zones: the Blue Zone, managed by the UN, is the negotiation center.

The two other zones will offer opportunities for civil society, NGOs, businesses, and cities and states, to showcase innovations, policies and best practices, and a place to gather to announce more pledges (for example, on water management, reforestation, energy efficiency, to name just a few).

Altogether, we expect the total of participants over the two-week period, to be approximately 40 000 people, including 4 000 from the media.

Regarding the process, what will be happening at Le Bourget?

Actually, four important processes are advancing in parallel that should “land” together during the COP.

First, the agreement itself, which has been negotiated for months in different sessions among the 196 parties.

Second, the commitments by nations, called INDCs, which, to date, have been announced by more than 150 countries. Actually, more than 160 countries representing 90% of the emissions have been received. The UNFCCC and the UNEP indicated that we’re on track, as these INDC allows us to stabilize climate warming around 3 degree. It’s not enough, but it’s a good start.

Third, the pledges by civil society (this includes the subnational level, states, cities organized in networks, and businesses and their networks).

And, the fourth one is a financial and technological package, which is indispensable to effectively act on climate, in reducing both the emissions (the mitigation part) and its effects on nature and human habitat (the adaptation part).

Each of those four processes supports and sustains the others.

What will happen in Paris during the COP?

On the margin of the negotiation, many other events will take place, of which I would like to highlight the Climate Summit for Local Leaders, to be held on December 4-6, organized by the Mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, at Paris City Hall and Michael Bloomberg, the U.N. Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for Cities and Climate Change.

You will find more information about other events that specifically relate directly to America in the handouts.

Now, before I close, I would like to add a couple of remarks on policies.

Acting against climate change saves lives abroad and at home. It also saves billions of dollars. This was demonstrated state-by-state in the Risky Business Report last year. When presenting it, Michael Bloomberg and Hank Paulson said: “Damages from storms, flooding, and heat waves are already costing local economies billions of dollars, (...) and the costs of inaction is impossible to ignore.”

The good news is that transition towards a low carbon economy creates jobs. \$1 million invested in clean energy sectors in the US creates approximately three times more jobs than if invested in the fossil fuel sector. Or, put another way, according to the University of Massachusetts study, three jobs will be created in clean energy sectors for each job lost in the fossil fuel sector.

The world negotiators need a strong presence in Paris, to demonstrate that the impact of this simple and profound equation (three jobs for one) is truly valuable. It is vital that Members of Congress, Governors, Mayors, business leaders and other stakeholders from the US, show their support at COP21, because a green mindset also means economic growth.