

**BIANCA JAGGER ADDRESS TO THE GERMAN BRITISH FORUM:
*ENERGY FOR THE FUTURE: GOVERNMENTS, CITIES AND
TECHNOLOGIES FOR THE NEW AGE*
20 October 2009**

Thank you James Close for your kind words of introduction. I am delighted to be addressing you at this forum for *Energy for the Future: Governments, Cities and Technologies for the New Age*. This afternoon we heard many insightful and innovative suggestions, on how to turn the global energy crisis into opportunity. Forums like these are vital to implement new strategies for business, for technology, and for tackling the issues of climate change. As Prime Minister Brown said yesterday: "*We cannot compromise with the earth, we cannot compromise with the catastrophe of unchecked climate change, so we must compromise with one another.*" (1) As Andrew Ladds said earlier, let us 'use the collective repository knowledge we have.'

Today we stand at a crossroads in history. The warnings from our most respected scientists are loud and clear, yet government leaders continue to ignore the scale of the threat. According to many scientists, we have less than a decade left to address the issue of climate change before we reach the "tipping point", or the point of no return. I was encouraged by Prime Minister Brown's words yesterday, pledging his commitment to reaching an agreement at Copenhagen: "*I urge my fellow leaders to work together to reach agreement amongst us, recognising both our common and our differentiated responsibilities – and the dire consequences of failure.*" (2)

Climate change is no longer just an environmental issue: it touches every part of our lives: peace, security, human rights, poverty, hunger, health, mass migration and economics. It is a global issue, and it calls for global action by individuals, governments, and corporations to create solutions, entrenched in an international legally binding framework. Climate change will affect everyone, everywhere, in every nation and from every socio economic group, in hundreds of ways: from the pollution of cities to erosion in rural areas; from contamination of the oceans and rivers to desertification; from mass migration to overcrowded cities and the security of individuals and states.

RENEWABLE ENERGY REVOLUTION

Tackling climate change is the overriding moral imperative of our century. We must embark upon a Copernican revolution, move from a fossil fuel economy to a renewable energy economy. We must switch to a more secure, lower-carbon energy system that does not undermine economic and social development, and addresses the threats of climate change, energy security risk, and global inequality. We must bring about the democratisation, and decentralisation of energy.

Promoting renewable energy must now become a global and universal priority. These technologies are the only viable solution to the imminent energy crisis. Nothing is macro-economically more necessary, more practical or cheaper than the conversion of our energy systems from conventional energies to renewable energy.

"*If there is reason for optimism, amidst the dire warnings,*" states a report by Economics for Equity and the Environment (THE ECONOMICS OF 350: THE BENEFITS AND

COSTS OF CLIMATE STABILIZATION) *“it is this: the costs of insuring the planet against climate disaster are not prohibitive. The best estimates of the costs of a vigorous, immediate effort to rebuild the world economy around carbon-free technologies are still in the range of one to three percent of world output (GDP) per year, even with the more stringent emissions reduction goals we are supporting.”* (3) This is the cost of action. As Ambassador Boomgarten said earlier today; we must weigh the cost of inaction.

Renewable energy is the only viable way to provide power to the unprecedented number of people now living on this planet- but it is also a financial opportunity, a resource that can be put to work for the advantage of all. In Professor Nicholas Stern’s words: *“investments in ... (these) technologies could provide sustainable and well-founded economic growth, in contrast to the recent booms, and eventual busts, driven by flaky dotcom ventures or inflated house prices.”* (4)

Renewable energy costs will generally go down, as they consist almost exclusively of technology costs; mass production will bring dramatic cost decreases. Costs for electricity generation by solar power in Germany, one of the pioneer nations for renewable energy, decreased about 60 percent from 1991 to 2003. Similarly, the costs for generating wind power declined more than 80 percent from the early 1980s until 2007. The cost of finite, conventional energies, however, will continue to rise as the sources dry up. (5)

In 2007, more than \$100bn was invested worldwide in renewable energy technology. (6) The report *“A low carbon economy: From vision to reality”* by James Close, partner in Ernst and Young’s Government Services, who will speak later, states that *The global market for low carbon goods and services is already worth more than £3 trillion.* (7) In 2008, for the first time, both the United States and the European Union added more power capacity from renewables than from traditional energy sources. Renewable energy is close to supplying a fifth of the world’s final energy consumption, if we include traditional biomass, large hydropower, and ‘new’ renewables such as small hydro, modern biomass, wind, solar, geothermal, and biofuels. (8) *A Low Carbon Economy, from Vision to Reality*, advocates strategies that *“integrate plans to support low carbon businesses into their broader proposals to stimulate the global economy. Governments need to create the conditions for success so that countries, regions and cities are at the forefront of low carbon business and investment. To do this, businesses large and small, and all levels of government must work together.”* (9)

We must broaden our thinking to provide financial incentives that empower households and businesses to invest in renewable energy. For example, “Feed-in Tariff” legislation in Germany has created a quarter of a million new jobs and enabled millions of people to benefit from renewable technologies.

President Obama pledged, during his presidential campaign, to spend \$150 billion to create green jobs; his administration promises to spend billions more on a host of infrastructure upgrades and other energy-related stimulus projects. (10) This is the right approach and it is my hope that President Obama will honour his pledges. European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso commented, on the 13th of May 2009, *“The fight against climate change is part of our recovery plan for Europe’s economy and for the global economy. It is indeed an opportunity for global prosperity.”* (11)

CITIES

Now, more than ever, architecture should make sustainability a priority. If the architectural and construction industries remain locked into a carbon driven, oil guzzling energy system, the environment and the economy will suffer.

Cities have shaped our model of civilization: industrial labour, a multiplicity of educational, career, leisure and cultural opportunities, and mass media. The concept of civilisation is in intricate symbiosis with that of the city, and we often judge civilisations not for their wisdom or art, but by the height of their buildings.

The twentieth century has marked a departure in architectural history. When supplies of oil, gas and construction material were easy to obtain, buildings soon lost their climatic and regional variations. Where previously living quarters necessarily had to be built from locally available materials, and architecture had to take the prevailing climate and ecological situation into account, plentiful supplies of energy and materials now gave architects and town planners a completely free hand, unfettered by the restrictions of local climate, geography and ecology. With the inevitable premium that is now placed on mobility, huge, polluting traffic corridors define the limits of our cities, and the boroughs within them. We have the opportunity, with the advent of a renewable energy revolution, to transform our cities and the way we build; businesses, planners and architects should take note.

Architectural and construction industries can prosper in the renewable energy revolution; A *Low Carbon Economy: From Vision to Reality*, states: “Government at all levels can also set out to create a market for green business by using its purchasing power to signal the market opportunities for low carbon. Being in the lead in public buildings would create opportunities for new technology as well as creating an environment where architects, builders and facilities managers are developing innovative and market leading solutions.”(12)

Dr Marc Weiss, Chairman and CEO of Global Urban Development, who was supposed to speak here today, asserts: *Through Climate Prosperity Strategies people, businesses, and organisations can thrive on becoming greener. By investing in sustainable industrial development based on technological innovation and resource efficiency, nations, regions, cities, and communities can promote economic growth, improve their standard of living, and expand businesses, jobs, and incomes through green savings, green opportunities, and green talent.* (13)

THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Economic and urban development in the last 200 years has largely been at the expense of the world’s ecosystems. Forest cover across the world has been reduced by about 50 per cent. Ways have to be found to pay developing countries for the global “ecosystem services” provided by their forest cover – and their capacity to absorb carbon dioxide and to release moisture to distant places. Under the auspices of climate justice this is a historic responsibility, and it needs to benefit the poorer tropical and subtropical countries of the world and their people above all else.

A renewable energy revolution will have crucial economic and social benefits for developing countries in the Global South. Renewable energy installations are less complex

to operate than conventional facilities; plants can be managed by local workforces in developing countries as part of a decentralised system. Home-grown renewable sources insulate economies against rising energy prices, and stimulate economic development overseas.

GOVERNMENTS, COPENHAGEN

There are ominous signs in the run up to Copenhagen that richer countries, the USA being one of them, may try to reduce their emission cuts by claiming offset benefits. Failure to honour the Kyoto protocol would be an appalling abdication of responsibility.

We are mere months from the commencement of the crucial talks at Copenhagen: I would strongly urge the implementation of the following simple solutions as part of the roadmap towards an agreement.

Action Points

- The criteria for the Copenhagen agreement should be based on the latest science, and built around the principles of equity and justice, not on political expediency and vested interests. This time we must not allow governments to pay mere “lip service” to any new agreement. World leaders must honour the pledges they have made.
- We must embark upon a global programme of forest protection and reforestation. Deforestation contributes nearly 20 per cent of the overall greenhouse gases emissions. The Stern review on the Economics of Climate Change recognises that “curbing deforestation is a highly cost-effective way of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.” Planting 10 million square kilometres of new indigenous forests will help stabilise the concentration of CO₂ in the earth’s atmosphere at 350 parts per million. (14)
- We must establish a new international initiative combining biosphere protection and restoration, in order to reverse the decline of biodiversity.
- Wealthy countries must live up to their responsibilities and set up an international investment fund that guarantees technology transfer from the Global North to the Global South. According to the McKinsey Global Institute, at least one trillion dollars must be invested over the next decade to enable developing countries to expand their economies through renewable energy, resource efficiency, and clean technologies. (15)
- We must provide financial incentives that empower households and businesses to invest in renewable energy and resource efficiency, such as the aforementioned “Feed-in Tariff” legislation.
- We must not permit the renewable energy revolution to be hijacked by the nuclear lobby. Let me be clear: nuclear technology is not renewable energy, it is not low-emission and it cannot address the issues of climate change; it is not a substitute for sustainable energy. Greenhouse gases are emitted at every stage of the nuclear fuel chain, from the mining, to uranium enrichment, through transportation and the construction of nuclear plants. We have to focus on renewable energy solutions that are truly solutions and do not create new risks.

- All countries must transform taxes on energy into taxes on emissions, promoting the supply and demand of emission-free energy.
- All governments must also subscribe to and support the work of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).
- Governments and Corporations whose practices put the environment and human life at risk must be held accountable for their actions.

The time for further excuses, postponement, or procrastination has long passed. Now is the time for decision-makers in politics and economics to take concrete steps to avoid catastrophic climate change, while reforming our financial system. It is the responsibility of world leaders, corporations, policy makers, Non Governmental Organisations and people across the world to call on our leaders to fulfil their responsibilities at Copenhagen, and beyond.

I would like to finish by quoting from Antoine de Saint-Exupery's 'The Little Prince':

"It's a question of discipline," the little prince told me.... "When you've finished washing and dressing each morning, you must tend your planet." (16)

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