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Renewable Energy

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United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2303

January 30, 1992

The Honorable James A. Baker, III
Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

By Messenger

Dear Secretary Baker,

Beginning February 5, the United Nations is sponsoring a meeting in New York to review the progress of past efforts, and the potential for future actions, to develop renewable energy sources. The product of this meeting could be a new international agreement to be acted upon at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Brazil this June.

In August 1990, the United Nations established a high-level working group of experts to prepare a comprehensive and analytical study on new and renewable sources of energy in preparation for the UNCED meeting. This group, the United Nations Solar Energy Group for Environment and Development (UNSEGED), examined the technological status of renewable energy technologies and reviewed the progress which has occurred since the Nairobi Program of Action was adopted in 1981.

Their report, *Solar Energy: A Strategy in Support of Environment and Development*, concludes that the technical potential for renewable energy sources is significant but their future contribution is largely a political question. As the working group report states:

"In the long-term, the utilization of renewable energy sources is not likely to be constrained by the availability of resources or cost-effective technologies. Political and administrative decisions are their primary constraints." (Report, page 3.)

The UN Solar Energy Report contains a series of national and international recommendations for action to address these constraints. These proposals will provide the focus for the discussions which will begin in New York in February.

As supporters of the development of renewable energy resources, we wish to encourage the United States representatives to take an active leadership role in these UN proceedings.

Pls. make
file of
UNCED materials -
"Renewable
Energy"

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Further, in order to fulfill our Constitutional responsibilities regarding any international agreement which may result, we would like to be consulted about these discussions. In particular, we would like to know whether:

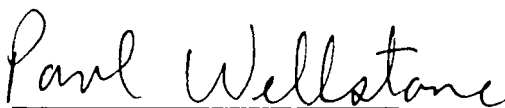
a) the United States delegation will support adopting a new international solar energy development plan of action as part of the UNCED process?

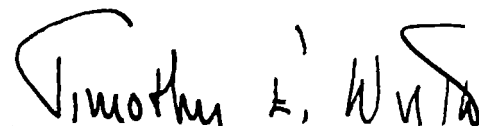
b) the United States will support the recommendations made in the UN Solar Energy Report for national and international action?

c) the United States is preparing any of its own initiatives to promote the development of renewable energy resources for action at the UNCED Conference?

Given the immediacy of the February meeting, we would appreciate your prompt response to this request. If you have any questions about this inquiry, please feel free to contact us directly or our respective staff -- Karl Gawell (Sen. Wellstone), Katie McGinty (Sen. Gore), Russ Shay (Sen. Wirth), Kim Tilley (Sen. Simon).

Sincerely,


Paul David Wellstone


Timothy E. Wirth


Al Gore, Jr.


Paul Simon

February 11, 1992

TO: Katie McGinty, Gore
Russ Shay, Wirth
Kim Tilley, Simon

FROM: Karl Gawell, Wellstone (4-9694)

Based upon discussions I have had yesterday with Thomas Johansen, primary author of the UN report, the negotiations in NY on renewables are at a critical stage. Attached is a letter I want to sent over to State today, and a copy of the draft text which the Committee is considering. According to sources there, the US is objecting to several paragraphs on policy grounds (tech transfer and externalities) as well as anything which smells of new funding.

They urge that we press now for US support for funding and institutional support.

Let me know ASAP if you want to go on this letter which will go out later today (4pm ish).

February 11, 1992

The Honorable James A. Baker, III
Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

By Messenger

Dear Secretary Baker,

On January 30, Senators Gore, Wirth, Simon, and myself wrote urging the United States to take a leadership role in advancing a new international agreement to promote renewable energy to be acted upon at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Brazil this June.

While we have not yet received a response from the Department of State, I/we understand that the United States representative to the negotiations underway in New York has taken a largely inactive role.

Without constructive support by the United States, the Draft Resolution presently before the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy does not appear to offer much hope for meaningful progress towards a new renewable energy plan of action. It is our understanding that the United States has not offered any proposals of its own to promote development of renewable energy resources. Instead, our representative appears to be pressing for additional deletions to the text which will *only serve to* weaken it even further.

The development of utilization of renewable energy resources is critical to global environmental and development goals. As the UN Solar Energy Report indicates, efforts over the past ten years have been seriously inadequate and a significant new international commitment is needed to achieve the potential of renewable energy sources.

I/we urge your immediate attention to these discussions to ensure that the United States plays a constructive, leadership role. In particular, I/we urge the United States to support efforts to strengthen and expand the international and regional organizations necessary to promote renewable energy development. I/we also urge the United States to support making the financial commitment necessary to advance international renewable energy efforts.

Sincerely,

Paul D. Wellstone

7-II-92
p.m.

G-77

Draft ResolutionDevelopment and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources
of Energy in the 1990s and Beyond.

1. The Committee on the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy,
2. Recalling General Assembly resolutions 36/193 of 17 December 1981, 37/250 of 21 December 1982, 38/169 of 19 December 1983, 39/173 of 17 December 1984, 41/170 of 5 December 1986, 43/192 of 20 December 1988 and 45/208 of 21 December 1990,
3. Reaffirming the validity of the Nairobi Programme of Action and emphasizing the need for further development and implementation of new and renewable sources of energy following the objectives of the Programme,
4. Recalling also General Assembly resolution 44/228 of 22 December 1989 on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,
5. Recalling further General Assembly resolution 45/199 of 21 December 1990 on the Fourth International Development Strategy,
6. Stressing the importance of the continued development and application of renewable energy technologies, taking into account, inter alia, the importance of social, environmental and developmental concerns,
7. Taking into account the fact that widely distributed and accessible renewable sources of energy could constitute a more significant share of world energy supply,
8. Having considered the Secretary-General's Report entitled "Solar Energy: A Strategy in support of Environment and Development; a comprehensive analytical study on renewable sources of energy", (document A/AC.218/1992/5),
9. Also having considered of the report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on New and Renewable Sources of Energy (document A/AC.218/1992/9), and the Pre-feasibility survey "A Proposed Network of Centres of Excellence of International Scope on New and Renewable Sources of Energy",
10. Reaffirming the fundamental objective of the NPA of promoting concerted action in the context of the energy transition for the development and utilization of new and renewable sources of energy with a view to helping meet future

overall energy requirements, especially those of developing countries. Such energy transition from an international economy based primarily on hydrocarbons to one based increasingly on new and renewable sources of energy should be orderly and peaceful and take place in a manner which, consistent with the needs and options of individual countries, is socially equitable, economically and technically viable, and environmentally sustainable,

11. Observing that environmental problems, especially with respect to the ozone layer depletion, climate change, urban air pollution, acidification, land degradation, desertification, erosion and deforestation, require strong and immediate action, and that in this regard new and renewable sources of energy could provide a major instrument to effectively address these problems,

12. Considering that developing an energy system based increasingly on new and renewable energy sources will require fundamental structural, economic, and institutional changes in industrialized and developing countries. This can only be achieved with a strong political will, active international cooperation, and public and private involvement,

13. Considering also that adopting a long-term approach is essential for the development of the infrastructure as well as the policy and institutional arrangements needed for utilizing new and renewable sources of energy,

14. Considering further that implementing such an approach will also require short and medium-term transitional policies.

Effective implementation of the Nairobi Programme of Action

Toward these ends, the Committee

1. Takes note of the Secretary-General's Report entitled "Solar Energy: A Strategy in support of Environment and Development; a comprehensive analytical study on renewable sources of energy", (document A/AC.218/1992/5), the report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on New and Renewable Sources of Energy (document A/AC.218/1992/9), and the Pre-feasibility survey "A Proposed Network of Centres of Excellence of International Scope on New and Renewable Sources of Energy".

2. Invites Member States to consider development of new and renewable sources of energy in the context of their overall national development plans and priorities, and coordinated as an integral part of energy sector programmes.

3. Invites Member States to consider the following measures to this end:

- a. Adopt and implement integrated national action programmes on the development and utilization of new and renewable energy sources, within the framework of strategies and policies for the transition to energy systems compatible with sustainable development.
- b. Establish targets for contributions of the different new and renewable energy sources to their energy supply, commensurate with the needs and options of individual countries.
- c. Establish and strengthen, as appropriate, national government institutions at an appropriately high level responsible for the development and utilization of new and renewable sources of energy. Where deemed necessary, cooperative arrangements at the sub-regional and regional levels should also be envisaged.
- d. Promote the utilization of new and renewable energy sources through: education, training and information programs; energy/environment planning and policy coordination; and research, development and demonstration, with a view to facilitating the implementation of national plans, including policies and programmes for achieving the targets established by the countries themselves.
- e. Adopt energy policies that provide reasonable and adequate incentives, measures and regulations for the development and utilization of new and renewable sources of energy. In this regard, environmental and social costs could be incorporated in national energy planning and project appraisals.
- f. Encourage funding of research, development and demonstration in the area of new and renewable energy sources, in particular through public energy investments devoted to promoting research, development, demonstrations and training related to new and renewable energy sources, commensurate with their potential to meet national energy needs and international responsibilities.
- g. Establish and implement procedures for recording statistical data on new and renewable-energy applications in their respective countries.

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- h. Provide information on their national programmes for promoting new and renewable energy sources in order to facilitate international cooperation.

4. Requests the Secretary-General and the United Nations system to implement the following recommendations:

- a. Promote rapid implementation of systems based on new and renewable energy sources, especially in developed countries in order to reduce possible environmentally harmful emissions in a manner consistent with their magnitude.
- b. Promote all efforts in the energy sector so that new and renewable energy sources and technologies for their utilization, together with energy-efficiency improvements, are given adequate priority as instruments for sustainable development.
- c. Ensure that the various entities within the United Nations system continue to carry out action-oriented programmes and projects for the effective implementation of the Nairobi Programme of Action, in accordance with the areas for priority action set up therein. With a view to secure a continuous effort of the system towards development and utilization of new and renewable sources of energy, new programmes and projects should be prepared upon completion of current ones, or suitable adjustment should be introduced to current activities in the light of the experience gained in their implementation. Technical cooperation among developing countries as a modality in programme formulation and implementation should be significantly expanded.
- d. Promote increased funding, inter alia, from new and additional financial resources, in support of the implementation of national action programs on new and renewable energy sources, in particular in developing countries.
- e. Promote rapid and effective transfer of new and renewable energy technologies amongst all countries and, in particular, on favorable and concessional terms to developing countries. In this regard, action should be taken to adapt currently-available technologies to local conditions, to support the build-up of the endogenous expertise and infrastructure needed to enable the implementation of new and renewable energy programmes, and to promote local production of technologies in order to enhance national self-reliance.

- f. Assist countries in the collection of data on new and renewable sources of energy in a standardized form, so that it can be useful at the international level.
 - g. Prepare and disseminate studies on new technological developments, techniques and strategies for identifying, locating and evaluating new and renewable energy sources.
 - h. Promote measures for assisting developing countries in the development of credit and marketing facilities designed to facilitate the development and utilization of promising new and renewable sources of energy technologies.
 - i. Promote the allocation of a significant and increasing share of aid funds devoted to the energy sector from multilateral and international agencies to viable new and renewable-energy projects.
 - j. Promote the mobilization of additional and adequate financial resources for the implementation of the Nairobi Programme of Action through existing or new financial institutions and mechanisms of the United Nations system. In this regard, the Governing Council of UNDP should be requested to consider revitalizing the Energy Account and converting it to an energy fund, as originally conceived.
 - k. Coordinate activities carried out within and outside the United Nations system, including intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, financial institutions, with a view to effectively promoting the utilization of new and renewable energy sources through efficient utilization of resources and avoidance of unnecessary overlappings and duplications.
5. Recommends that institutional arrangements within the United Nations system should be strengthened with a view to ensuring an effective implementation of the Nairobi Programme of Action. United Nations secretariat arrangements should be strengthened consistent with the magnitude of the supporting tasks to be carried out concerning the scientific, technical, monitoring and coordination aspects of the development and utilization of new and renewable sources of energy. When appropriate, Governments should be requested to second technical staff. However, final institutional arrangements should be implemented in the light of the outcome and recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.
6. Requests the Secretary-General to undertake the necessary consultations with a view to enlisting enhanced financial support

from donor countries and multilateral financial institutions for the development and utilization of new and renewable sources of energy.

7. Invites interested Member States, the United Nations system and the international community to provide the necessary financial support to implement the Network of Centers of Excellence as recommended by the Castel Gandolfo Colloquium of high-level experts on new and renewable sources of energy. Such a network should be linked to regional new and renewable sources of energy centers and networks.

8. Requests the Secretary-General to provide appropriate assistance through the United Nations system in the measurement and evaluation of new and renewable energy resources in developing countries.

9. Requests further the Secretary-General to prepare an analytical, comparative, and comprehensive study of experiences gained world-wide in implementing new and renewable energy strategies, and proposals for effective policies.

10. Requests further the Secretary-General and the United Nations System to prepare a comprehensive report on the progress in implementation of the present resolution at the forty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Contribution of the Committee on the Development
and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy
to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
through the fourth session of its Preparatory Committee

11. Requests the Secretary-General to forward to the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee of the Conference for consideration under Agenda 21 the reports entitled "Solar Energy: A Strategy in support of Environment and Development; a comprehensive analytical study on renewable sources of energy" (document A/AC.218/1992/5); the report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on New and Renewable Sources of Energy (document A/AC.218/1992/9); and the Pre-feasibility survey "A Proposed Network of Centres of Excellence of International Scope on New and Renewable Sources of Energy".