



Remarks Inauguration of Embassy Solar Panels Event  
Ambassador Noah Mamet  
Tuesday, December 1, 2015 at 15:00

Buenas tardes. Bienvenidos y muchas gracias a todos por venir. Estamos muy felices de celebrar la inauguración de la COP 21 en París y la inauguración de nuestros nuevos paneles solares en la Embajada. Este proyecto es un primer paso concreto para optimizar el consumo energético en la Embajada y así combatir el Cambio Climático que nos preocupa a todos. Por eso, quisiera continuar en inglés para compartir con ustedes nuestros pensamientos y acciones.

First I would like to thank you all for joining us at this special moment today, especially our extinguished guests from the Foreign Ministry and various diplomatic missions.

We are here today because we agree that the challenge of climate change must be a priority for all of us. Leaders from almost 200 countries have assembled in Paris this week for the COP21 United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change, so we thought today would be the perfect day to unveil our new solar panels.

President Obama reminded us yesterday that all nations, all levels of government, as well as businesses and individuals play a critical role in the solution to climate change. He said, "What should give us hope that this is a turning point, that this is the moment we finally determine we would save our planet, is the fact that our nations share a sense of urgency about this challenge and a growing realization that it is within our power to do something about it."

And I was recently at the White House for the Pope Francis welcome reception where he said, "Climate change is a problem that no longer can be left to future generations." We at the U.S. Embassy agree and are trying to lead by example.

Climate change is happening now, and we can definitively point to man-made causes. Scientists report that since 2000, the Earth has experienced 14 of the 15 warmest years on record AND 2015 was the warmest of all. Without a doubt, climate change is altering our agriculture, ecosystems, infrastructure, and health, among other things. No nation is immune to the effects of climate change.

There are many important ways to fight climate change: increasing energy efficiency, reducing deforestation and better agricultural practices are all important examples, but I would like to focus today on renewable energy.

We have to change our current mode of energy production from burning fossil fuels to renewable energy if we are ultimately going to save the planet. This is likely the most difficult challenge mankind has ever faced; moving from fossil fuel-based economies to renewable energy societies.

But today there are many signs that we can succeed if all countries work together, with a common purpose and sense of urgency.



For example, in the U.S. economic output is at an all-time high, while carbon output is at the lowest levels in 20 years. In fact, the global economy grew last year while emissions from fossil fuels stayed flat. This is a huge achievement, but only a first step.

The costs of wind and solar power are coming down faster now than we could have predicted five years ago and in parts of the U.S., these clean sources of power are now cheap sources of power.

Today, solar panels cost only 1% of what they did 25 years ago AND they are of much better quality. Last year alone, the U.S. added more solar panels every 3 weeks than were installed in all of 2008!

The U.S. is investing heavily in renewable energy technologies. We have tripled the amount of wind generated energy and increased the amount of energy from solar by more than twenty times. And the U.S. is investing in energy efficiency in every way imaginable.

In fact, I have installed solar panels on my home in California, so I know first-hand the efficiencies that can be achieved.

Today, we are celebrating the installation of solar panels on our Embassy, and I believe it is the very first Embassy to do so in Argentina! Our panels will be used to power consular operations as well as charge electric cars that we plan to begin using next year. In fact we have an employee's electric car right here to demonstrate later. The television monitors you see in the walkways are also powered by our panels. This array is just the first step as we look for more ways to reduce the electricity we take from Argentina's grid and reduce our overall carbon footprint.

The array above me has 72 panels that can generate approximately 11 kilowatts on a sunny day. Even on a cloudy day, our solar array is still able to produce energy, which is stored on batteries, ensuring that the electricity will always be on.

The output produced by the solar panels would not have been possible without the energy and effort of many members of the Embassy Management team. I would like to give special recognition to our incredible Management Section. This team worked really hard, under tight deadlines, to make the vision of renewable energy a reality for our Embassy. We could not have done it without the dedication of the entire Section.

On the topic of reducing carbon footprint, here at our Embassy in Argentina we're also reducing waste and recycling. In the past year, we have recycled more than 2500 kilos of paper. And our Visa section is one of the few in the world to eliminate paper during the application process. All documents will be submitted electronically to reduce the need for paper. And this is just the starting point.

As you all know, the world's leaders are meeting at the global climate summit in Paris. So, I would like to take a few minutes to comment on our goals as well as the measures the United States will implement to meet the challenge of climate change.



The United States is taking a leadership role and by announcing ambitious goals to reduce carbon emissions

Although carbon emissions in the US are the lowest they have been in 25 years, President Obama announced in March that the U.S. will lower greenhouse gas emissions by 26-28% below 2005 levels.

We know this will not hurt the economy because carbon emissions in the US today are about at the same level as in 1990, although our economy has nearly tripled in size;

Regarding the auto industry, President Obama mandated the doubling of fuel efficiency for cars and trucks, creating the highest energy efficiency for autos in the history of the United States.

Through President Obama's historic Clean Power Plan, we have created the first national standards to limit power plant emissions, requiring a 32% reduction of pollution, from electric power plants by the year 2030.

Wind energy is so popular now in the United States that the amount of electricity generating capacity installed now is greater than 60 large-scale nuclear plants.

The US has a long history of working with Argentina on energy issues and we now look forward to partnering with Argentina in the development of solar, wind and other renewable energies.

Argentina is among the top countries in the world in terms of potential for the development of renewable energies. You have the world's best sun in the north and wind in the south. This will not only help in the fight against climate change, but will create new industries in solar and wind production and installation. In fact, in my home state of CA the #1 industry in the creation of new jobs was the installation of solar panels on homes. Over 750K people now work in the solar industry alone. And all this will create huge economic savings for the country, like it has in the U.S.

Now, I would like to conclude my comments by quoting Governor Jay Inslee from the State of Washington, who is in Paris for the conference. He made the critical observation that: "We are the first generation to feel the impact of climate change and the last generation that can do something about it." We can achieve enormous results when we combine public policy, technological innovation, investment, and political will. And we are very enthusiastic about the advances we see happening every day.

Quoting Martin Luther King Jr., President Obama warned, "There is such a thing as being too late. And when it comes to climate change that hour is almost upon us." If we act now, then we won't be too late. We all must work toward a low carbon future with sense of urgency.

Muchísimas gracias por su tiempo.