



Chairwoman Barbara Lee
Subcommittee on Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
Hearing: Global Climate Finance
May 19, 2021

As Prepared

Thank you everyone for joining us for this important hearing on global climate finance and combating climate change. I want to welcome our esteemed witnesses: Leo Martinez-Diaz from the Department of State, Mathew Haarsager from the Department of Treasury, Jeffrey Haeni from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and Jake Levine from the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC).

Climate change is often framed as a threat in the distant future, but the science is clear. If climate change is not tackled now, and in the most urgent manner possible, we will have done irreversible harm to our environment and to future generations.

Just as the pandemic has revealed issues of racial injustice and inequity within public health, climate change also negatively impacts vulnerable and marginalized communities disproportionately. And those who are already experiencing tough conditions only see things worsening: with droughts and floods destroying food security in already fragile, impoverished areas; economic livelihoods gradually eroding with changing landscapes; and increased conflict and instability due to shifting resources and simmering social tensions that expose women, children, and other vulnerable people to exploitation and violence.

Climate change is a direct threat to every investment made by the State, Foreign Operations bill – natural resources, food security, global health, human rights and governance, and peacebuilding. I am so glad that the Biden/Harris Administration has realized this urgency and is putting addressing climate change at the center of United States diplomatic and financial priorities. The International Climate Finance Plan released last month announced the intention to double, by 2024, United States annual public climate financing to developing countries relative to what we were providing in 2016.

While much of our development and humanitarian achievements are threatened by climate change, the programs within the State, Foreign Operations jurisdiction are central to driving progress against these threats. Any climate change strategy has to work globally with countries and communities, as well as the international bodies that challenge governments to do more and



raise their ambitions. We need to understand the various tools within the global climate architecture and how these different pieces combine for a comprehensive and effective approach.

Therefore, our witnesses today are the right people to share their agencies' respective roles in the climate agenda, bilaterally and multilaterally, and inform us how our Committee can support these efforts.

Through the Department of State and USAID, the United States provides bilateral climate assistance and partners with international organizations on adaptation and mitigation programs. These programs assist communities adjusting to changing weather patterns as well as protect the landscapes that help reduce pollution and allow wildlife to thrive.

The Department of the Treasury will be critical in coordinating multilateral efforts on climate action at the World Bank and other international financial institutions. The DFC will mobilize private sector financing into climate-focused investments in countries with the least ability to cope. These efforts will help re-establish U.S. leadership on climate change as well as revitalize our partnerships in the global community.

I am specifically interested in how we ensure women and youth are part of our climate efforts. Women are frequently excluded from this conversation despite being the most active in their local communities and dealing with the impacts on their personal households. Their inclusion in the climate change discussion is critical to creating a bottom-up effort that starts from within families and communities.

Further, it is our children and youth who face the inevitable consequences if we fail to act. It is crucial that we educate our young people to understand the complexities of this issue and equip them with the knowledge and skills to carry this responsibility.

Thank you again for being here and for your agencies' leadership on these issues.