

Many thanks to all the groups who worked to make this meeting possible, including the Commission for the Efficient Use of Energy (CONUEE), the Secretariat of Energy (SENER), the United States Department of Energy, the Mexican Coalition for Energy Efficiency in Buildings, the Global Cool Cities Alliance, and Winbuild.

This conference continues the tradition of cooperation and collaboration between the United States and Mexico. It is in the interest of both countries to work bilaterally and with other partners internationally to improve energy efficiency and provide a better world for future generations.

The United States and Mexico are working on a wide range of activities to encourage the use of energy from

renewable sources, improve energy efficiency, develop standards for energy use, and protect the environment. Exchanging ideas on how to encourage cool buildings is one more important aspect of these shared efforts. Cooler buildings can be an important part of efforts to use energy more efficiently and reduce greenhouse gases, because such buildings trap less heat and therefore require less energy for cooling. This is particularly important in a warm-weather country such as Mexico.

Improving our construction practices for new buildings and upgrading existing buildings is particularly important.

Buildings are where we live, work and play. Our construction decisions have implications for decades, so we have a great incentive to make smart decisions now that will allow us to save energy in the future.

President Obama also recognizes the critical role of improving building efficiency. In December 2011, he announced nearly \$4 billion in combined federal and private sector energy upgrades to buildings in the United States over the next 2 years. These investments will save building owners and tenants billions in energy costs, benefit workers and residents in the buildings who will have more comfortable working temperatures with less need for heating and air conditioning, promote energy independence, and create tens of thousands of jobs in the hard-hit construction sector.

Better buildings – with cool surfaces from good insulation, light-colored cool roofs which reflect sunlight rather turning it into heat, and high-performance windows that minimize

heat gains inside buildings -- are an important part of a comprehensive sustainability strategy. They provide many different benefits: they save money by cutting energy waste; improve the quality of life of our citizens; and create economic opportunities in building construction and renovations.

Cool surfaces have benefits for many types of buildings, from offices to apartment buildings to industrial structures. In low-income housing, for example, adopting cool surfaces can improve the health and comfort of residents by lowering indoor temperatures, even without air conditioning. Likewise, incorporating cool surfaces into warehouses and industrial buildings can reduce the indoor temperature and thereby increase worker productivity.

Cooler buildings not only reduce the need for air conditioning and are more comfortable to live and work in, but can improve the city around them. Cooler cities have lower incidences of air pollution, are more resilient to heat waves, reduce peak electricity demand on summer days, and provide a higher quality of life to urban residents.

But in order to increase the number of cool buildings, we need to promote public awareness of the benefits of this type of construction and promote clear standards.

Likewise, we need to make sure there is financing for them. It is important that existing financing mechanisms for green buildings also help to finance the adoption of cool surfaces.

I am sure you will be discussing many of these issues later today and will look forward to hearing more about how cool construction can best be adapted to Mexican conditions.

I applaud the conference participants for convening to share their expertise and work together, and I hope your work today will help to develop Mexico-specific plans for cool roofs and identify a suitable site in Mexico for a demonstration project.

Thank you again for your work and dedication to this important subject.