

## Commission conveys African American perspectives on climate change to Copenhagen Conference (COF

Written by

Thursday, 17 December 2009 17:28

---

COPENHAGEN – The climate change issue offers an enormous opportunity for addressing a broad range of social issues of critical concern to minority communities across the world, according to members of the U.S.-based Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies' Commission to Engage African Americans on Climate Change who are attending the United Nations' climate talks here.

At a press conference held at the Copenhagen summit, Commission delegates said that the process of transforming the global energy economy holds enormous potential for making progress on issues of economic opportunity, health and housing in many countries.

“Climate change is the civil rights issue of the 21st century,” said Dr. Julianne Malveaux, President of Bennett College for Women and a nationally recognized economist, writer and syndicated columnist in the U.S. “Climate change hits minority communities the hardest, but at the same time we must ensure that policies aimed at reversing climate change bring opportunities and not further misery to our communities.”

Advocating for both social justice and economic sustainability, Frank M. Stewart, President and COO of the American Association of Blacks in Energy and former assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of Energy, urged that communities of color be put in the forefront of the climate change debate.

Economic development and clean energy, said Mr. Stewart, can be the centerpiece of a new strategy for engaging minority communities on pathways to progress. “Across the entire country,” he said, “more young people see green jobs as an important career opportunity. Once interested in law or medicine, they are now moving towards energy.”

The Joint Center formed the Commission of diverse and distinguished scientists, lawmakers, academics, faith, nonprofit, business, labor and advocacy leaders to ensure that the concerns of minority communities are represented as efforts are made to reduce fossil fuel use, lower greenhouse gas emissions and shift toward a clean energy economy.

The Commission believes responsible and equitable climate change legislation should achieve the following goals:

1. Reduce emissions to avoid dangerous climate change and as a result improve overall air quality and public health;
2. Shift America away from an over reliance on fossil fuels to a clean energy economy;
3. Recognize and minimize any economic impacts resulting from regulating dangerous greenhouse gases; and
4. Ensure that vulnerable communities and ecosystems are not disproportionately impacted by climate change, while fostering international emissions reductions commitments.

To achieve these goals, the Commission seeks to address the impacts of climate change on the most impacted and disadvantaged communities, promote green jobs and economic opportunity, and ensure protection of low-income households. In addition to Dr. Malveaux and Mr. Stewart, members of the Commission's delegation to COP15 include Carolyn Green of EnerGreen

## Commission conveys African American perspectives on climate change to Copenhagen Conference (COP

Written by

Thursday, 17 December 2009 17:28

---

Capital Management; Dr. Robert D. Bullard, Clark Atlanta University; Leslie G. Fields, Esq., Sierra Club; Dr. Beverly Wright, Dillard University; and Gina E. Wood, Royce Brooks and Lindsay Boroush representing the Joint Center.

To follow the Joint Center at COP15, visit <http://jcpes.wordpress.com> .