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Remarks at the Connecting the Americas 2022 Ministerial

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REMARKS AT THE CONNECTING THE AMERICAS 2022 MINISTERIAL

Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State¹

SECRETARY CLINTON: Okay. Thank you all very, very much. I apologize that we were running late. We were running late from a prior meeting about security, citizen security. Now we are moving toward energy security, an equally important subject that really can determine how quickly and inclusively growth can take place in the Americas.

I want to thank my friend and colleague, the Foreign Minister of Colombia, for co-hosting this event and co-chairing our discussion, also the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, the Organization of American States, and all of you. I will be very brief before turning it over.

Connecting the Americas 2022 was aimed at making sure that citizens, businesses, schools, hospitals all had a reliable, sustainable supply of electricity. In some places in the Americas, that's not an issue, but in many others it still is. It's expensive, unreliable, and in some places still unavailable.

So what we want to do is pursue the goal endorsed by our leaders at the Summit of the Americas to get to the goal of universal access to electricity by 2022. And that strategy was based on enhancing electrical interconnections, increasing investments in the power sector, developing renewable energy sources, and increasing cooperation.

This last point, increasing cooperation, is key. It is a security issue, it's obviously a power issue, and it's a political issue. We need to build trust and partnerships among governments and the businesses of the Americas. We need to show leadership and resolve in doing this. I firmly believe that Connecting the Americas is good for everybody and it will increase the economic pie by bringing more people into reliable, affordable, electric resources.

It is very clear we need strong policy and regulatory frameworks. That's the only way cross-border electricity will work. We also have to raise hundreds of billions of dollars in private investment to achieve this goal. Clear, fair, and predictable rules will attract investment and encourage investors. And we need to make our case to all constituencies

1. Hillary Rodham Clinton, U.S. Secretary of State, Remarks at the Connecting the Americas 2022 Ministerial, (Sept. 27, 2012) (transcript available at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2012/09/198333.htm>).

that by working together we can protect our environment, we can limit the social risks that communities face by expanding connectivity.

It's a complex undertaking. The United States stands ready to work with all of you as a partner on bringing electricity to all the people of the hemisphere. We created, four years ago, the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas, ECPA. A year ago, I created an Energy Bureau in the State Department. Our ambassador who heads that, Carlos Pascual, is here. We're providing technical assistance. We just had a conference in Guatemala last week with regulatory agency representatives and private companies to discuss how to create a strong and effective regional power market. Next month, Ambassador Pascual will represent the United States at the Caribbean Renewable Energy Forum. And on the margins of CREF, we will hold our annual Energy Dialogue with our partners in the Caribbean, just as we've done every year I have served as Secretary.

Now, I just want to echo the calls that you will hear. We need concrete targets, timelines, if we expect to stay on track to achieve the goal by 2020. I think this is a win-win. I know that there are problems between countries, between private sector partners and public sector partners. I am certainly not naive about that. I get it. But this is a time for leadership and it's a time to seize opportunities that will make everybody richer, and I'm all for that. And so let's make sure that we have universal access to electricity in this hemisphere. I am convinced that the Western Hemisphere, North and South America alike, are poised for incredible progress. But this is one of those obstacles that holds us back.

So with that, Maria Angela, please take the floor.

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