

**Hilary French**  
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Thanks very much Jill. I have to say it's been such a pleasure working with Jill and Sean and the rest of the team here at Cornell [Global Labor Institute]. They've done such an impressive job pulling together these meetings over the last few years. It's really been a great pleasure for me to be part of the process.

I'd of course like to thank the previous speakers this morning for the very thought-provoking words that they've given us to sort of kick off the deliberations over the next few days, that I know just from looking at the program are going to be incredibly rich. I think there's going to be a lot of real substance that comes out of this conference, which is not always the case with conferences, so that's terrific!

I think the introduction we've had this morning was *exactly* the kind of message we needed to get these discussions under way, particularly the message that comes from Professor Socolow's work along with his colleague Stephen Pacala. In case any of you want the paper version, it's available on the website for the conference, the *Scientific American* article. For me, reading it over on the train last night on the way up here from Washington, it was just so refreshing to hear the sort of optimistic message that "this problem is solvable, and in a way that will provide jobs, for all of us." That's not always been evident to those of us looking at this problem over the last decade or two, really. Often it seemed to be sort of an insurmountable problem, that there was just no way that we could ever achieve cuts on the order of magnitude that the scientists tell us will be necessary to really get this problem under control. We now have the road map, so that's terrific news.

I've been asked to respond a little bit to Professor Socolow's presentation. Particularly with a focus on some of the global issues that he raises, and that of course emerge from any effort to deal with an issue as fundamentally global in nature as the threat of global climate change.

In doing so, I just wanted to really highlight for you a few points both that Professor Socolow made this morning, and also that are laid out very clearly in the article. Probably the most, again, another optimistic conclusion that emerges from this work is the conclusion that “the goal of de-carbonization” does not conflict with “the goal of eliminating the world’s most extreme poverty.” Again, that’s not something one would necessarily assume to be the case when you look at the polarization of the politics over this issue, particularly at the moment between the whole debate about, "Will it be China or US or what?" It’s often set up as though these things are in opposition. But in fact, it's only a fifth of a wedge that’s required to provide energy for the two billion people on earth that lack it. We know that there are a lot of pieces of the pie from where this one fifth of a wedge can be found, so that’s a very encouraging conclusion.

However, as was laid out in the article, we all know that there are going to be major challenges. It is a global problem and it does global action on the part of countries everywhere. Professor Socolow makes it very clear that both developed and developing nations will need to cut their emissions *relative* to where they would otherwise have been. That’s the key. Cutting them relative to where they otherwise would have been, does not mean that they need to be cut from where they currently *are* in developing countries, where there’s obviously a need for emissions to *grow* to meet basic human needs. At the same time there’s a need for those of us who live in industrial countries to cut our emissions because we currently emit at such a disproportionate level in terms of our fair share of the world's total.

I think the conclusion of the article is also very interesting. The authors say that *if* we’ve chosen this path at the end; we reach 2050 and we’ve actually done what’s laid out in this article, it says, “if this happens, humanity will have learned to address its collective destiny and to share the planet.” I thought the theme of "sharing the planet" was an interesting one to reflect upon, particularly here at this gathering where we’re so lucky to be joined by representatives from I believe from over 40 countries from five continents.

I think we can reflect a little bit on what does this conference here at Cornell has to do with this challenge of helping us to learn how we’re going to share this planet? I think there are couple of things. First of all, of course because we’re here in the United States, we have to recognize the

pre-eminent importance of getting the United States to re-engage in the international effort to address this problem. In that light, it's just so very important to have the US labor movement a key part of this process and ideally a key ally in pushing for the policy changes that are going to be needed to get the US back to the table internationally.

As we've already said, sharing the planet of course involves countries all over the world. Making this "sharing the planet" work, is going to require extraordinary, perhaps unprecedented, I would argue, levels of international cooperation and coordination. When you think about some of the complicated mechanisms, some of the trading schemes and such that are being set up to deal with this problem internationally, this is not a simple task. It's very import that we have the international labor and the environmental communities and movements working together on this task so that we can shape the terms of this new global bargain in a way that will good both for workers and for the environment.

Finally, just a few words about role of the UN Environmental Programme in all of this. As was mentioned, I serve as an advisor to UNEP and I'm very pleased that Olivier Deleuze of UNEP, who runs the work on labor and environment for UNEP out of UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, will be joining us. I don't think he's here yet, but he will be here tomorrow. This was very good timing that he happened to be here at the time of this conference. UNEP's been putting quite a bit of work over the last few years in trying to forge this alliance between the labor movement and the environment movement internationally. In fact, I first met Sean a couple of years ago in Nairobi at the First Global Trade Union Assembly. We have linked *this* assembly, this North American Labor Assembly, to a series of regional trade union assemblies that have been taking place with UNEP support around the world over the last two years, including in Latin American and Africa, most recently.

I'm very pleased that we can see this gathering that we have here as part of a broader global process. I look forward to the conversations over the next few days as we work collectively to determine how to translate Professor Socolow's very inspiring vision and for a de-carbonized [world].