

in particular the North American Competitiveness Council (NACC), representatives from the business community who have helped us identify and develop solutions to the most pressing issues affecting North American competitiveness.

Our citizens represent the true promise and potential of North America. Our governments help best when they act to promote the conditions necessary for the liberty, safety and success of our people. We believe that we should continue and strengthen our regular dialogue and ongoing cooperation. The partnership among Canada, Mexico and the United States is broader than the sum of our many bilateral and trilateral activities. We share the goals of strengthening democratic governance and reducing barriers to trade within our region and beyond. We also share a common purpose to strengthen our hemispheric institutions and consultative processes.

We will continue working to fight transnational threats that pose challenges to our countries and to the well being of our people, such as organized crime; trafficking in arms, people, and drugs; smuggling; terrorism; money laundering; counterfeiting; and border violence. The transnational nature of these threats makes it imperative that our domestic efforts be complemented and strengthened by our cooperation together, and in international fora.

We reiterate our support for the Bali Action Plan and stress the urgency of reaching agreement to ensure the full, effective and sustained implementation of the

U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change now, up to and beyond 2012. We believe that the Major Economies Leaders Meeting should make a contribution to that outcome. All should redouble efforts to address climate change and to establish nationally appropriate programs and goals to be reflected in binding international commitments based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, to contribute to ensuring global greenhouse gas emission reductions, adaptation measures, energy security, and sustainable development. We are determined to work together to further explore regional cooperation in climate change efforts, including, but not limited to, advancing innovative and suitable clean energy technologies, building the capacity to adopt and deploy them and developing appropriate financial and technical instruments. We reaffirm our shared conviction that increased trade in environmental goods, services, and technologies can have a positive impact on global climate change efforts and encourage the removal of barriers to such trade.

We welcome the invitation of President Calderon to host the next meeting of North American leaders in 2009.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this joint statement. An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Community Leaders in New Orleans *April 22, 2008*

I want to thank the Governor, thank the mayor, thank the parish presidents, Congressmen. Thank you all very much—city council leaders, compassionate citizens from New Orleans. Thank you very much for

briefing me and my team and the new Coordinator from the White House, Doug O'Dell, for keeping us abreast of progress that has been made down here and challenges that remain.

You know, one of the things—I came to New Orleans and spoke about the Federal commitment, and I said, it’s been a devastating period, and the Federal Government is committed and will remain committed to helping. Thus far, the Federal Government’s committed \$120 billion—little more than that—of taxpayers’ money to help all along the coast. I think it’s money well spent. I think it’s important for our country that the Gulf Coast region and the great city of New Orleans recover as quickly as possible.

My impression is that—you know, that there’s a lot more hope now than there was even from a year ago. I mean, there’s just—people have a little different bounce in their step. But there are some significant problems. One is we got to make sure these levees meet the obligations and meet the standards.

Secondly, I am concerned about the health care system that was torn up and needs to be rebuilt in a way that encourages there to be good health care and in a way that recognizes the changing population of New Orleans.

Thirdly, I have been concerned about the stories on crime, just like the citizens have been worried about the stories on crime. And I appreciate the Federal attorney giving me an update, and I appreciate the mayor’s efforts to work hard to hold people to account for breaking the law. That’s what the average citizen expects; that’s what the taxpayers who are helping the people down here want to see.

All in all—and then, finally, public housing restoration—it’s a big issue in New Orleans. It’s—but it’s an issue where there is a plan, and we just need to follow through on the plan.

So there are some hurdles, but this city has come a long way and—to the point where I felt very comfortable hosting the international conference with the President of Mexico and the Prime Minister of Canada. And I will tell you that not only did the leaders feel welcomed in New Orleans and feel comfortable in New Orleans and feel relaxed in New Orleans, but so did the delegations they brought with them. New Orleans is a great city to host a meeting or host a convention. They know what they’re doing down here. The city is recovered, it’s on its feet, and it’s bouncing back. And it is an honor to be back here.

And I want to thank you all for sharing your thoughts with me. And thank you for being leaders and helping this part of the—vital part of the country recover.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:07 p.m. at Galatoire’s Restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Piyush “Bobby” Jindal of Louisiana; Mayor C. Ray Nagin of New Orleans, LA; Douglas V. O’Dell, Jr., Federal Coordinator, Office of Gulf Coast Rebuilding; Jim Letten, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Louisiana; President Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa of Mexico; and Prime Minister Stephen Harper of Canada.

Remarks on Arrival in Baton Rouge, Louisiana

April 22, 2008

The President. First of all, it’s good to be back in Baton Rouge, home of the LSU Tiger national championship football team. I had the honor of welcoming the team and Coach Les Miles to the White House,

and it was a great honor for me, and I enjoyed it. And I do want to congratulate the good folks of Louisiana for supporting a football team that brought great credit to the game.