

Whatever the exact dollar amount, it is time for Congress to wake up and start discussing these very real costs. This is why I am working with several colleagues to establish a fee on carbon pollution. We hope to have a draft framework soon to start this discussion. The idea is simple: The big carbon polluters pay a fee to the American people to cover the cost of dumping their waste into our atmosphere and oceans—the costs they now push off onto the rest of us, giving them unfair advantage against their competitors.

I am pleased to participate in an effort to determine how best to assess a carbon pollution fee, how to protect American manufacturers from overseas competition that is cheating, and how to protect middle- and low-income families. It has been recognized by Republicans and Democrats alike that a carbon pollution fee can reduce emissions and help make the market more efficient.

Last month Senator SANDERS and Senator BOXER introduced related legislation, and I commend them for their efforts. I also wish to commend Senator BOXER this week, as chairwoman on the Environment and Public Works Committee, for beginning a regular appearance on the floor to draw this Chamber's attention to the dangers of carbon pollution. I hope more colleagues will join us in this important discussion. It is economics 101, it is law 101, and it is fairness 101.

We have had enough sleepwalking. We have had enough silence. We have been warned by our national defense and intelligence communities, we have been warned by the national academies, we have been warned by the Government Accountability Office, we have been warned by the overwhelming consensus of the scientific community, and, of course, we are hearing from millions of concerned Americans. It is time for this Congress to wake up and to put a price on carbon pollution that matches the costs of carbon pollution. We won't get it done if we don't wake up to what is happening all around us.

I yield the floor, and I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WHITEHOUSE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

JOB CREATION

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I rise today to reflect on how we can do what we so often say we want to do here in the Senate, and that is to help grow our American economy, to help create jobs for people from our home States and from all across our country.

Yesterday, in my State of Delaware, I cohosted with my congressional col-

leagues a job fair—a job fair where 1,300 people showed up. They showed up early, stayed late, and interviewed for jobs with dozens of employers. It was a personal reminder of how many people in my home State and across this great country of ours continue to look for work in this recovery that is still too slow. It is a reminder that one of our core challenges in the government is to do what we can to create an environment of opportunity and an environment of economic growth where the people we work for have a shot at a better job.

One of the things I think we can do is to seize opportunities in the global markets, because 95 percent of consumers worldwide actually live beyond our borders. As the chair of the Subcommittee on Africa, on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I wanted to take some time today to draw the attention of those in this Chamber and those who watch us around the country to the enormous opportunity presented by the continent of Africa.

Too often the impression of Africa in the American media and in the popular imagination is one that focuses on crises—on very real humanitarian or security crises—in a few countries such as Somalia or Mali or Congo. The average American, the average Member of this Chamber, often overlooks a changed reality in the last decade—a decade in which 6 of the 10 fastest growing economies on Earth were in sub-Saharan Africa. In fact, studies show in the decades to come that number will simply increase to seven.

So what are we to make of all this opportunity in Africa? There are some Fortune 500 companies—well-known household names such as Coca-Cola, Caterpillar,

DuPont-Pioneer—that have seen this opportunity and are taking advantage of it. They have recognized a vast and rapidly growing middle class in countries such as Nigeria, Chad, Ethiopia, and Rwanda—not exactly household name countries and not exactly countries the average American thinks of as having great world markets. But these companies have penetrated these markets and have recognized the opportunity that lies within.

It is important they have done that in no small part with help from the U.S. Government. But as I held two hearings last year on this subcommittee, and we met—the folks who work with me and myself—with folks from think tanks and from companies and embassies, we realized we could do this better; we could be more streamlined, more targeted, and more focused in the work we are doing to take advantage of this remarkable opportunity.

It is also, frankly, in our strategic national interest for us to do a better job of promoting U.S.-Africa trade, because as African economies grow, it promotes free markets, democratic values, good governance, and stability in African countries. And by ensuring

these countries and the regions are stable and economically vibrant, we reduce the number of times we are drawn into humanitarian crises or security crises and we improve the lot of hundreds of millions of Africans who then go on in a virtuous cycle of building their trade relationships with us.

As I have heard time after time, it takes firsthand personal engagement, it takes trade missions, it takes being there in person to grasp the scope of the opportunities and to respond to them responsibly. To do that well, it takes American diplomats and American representatives there on the ground.

I won't soon forget meeting with a head of state in West Africa on a trip with another Senator last year, and he asked us why America isn't more present; why we don't send more trade delegations. He said, the Brazilians were here last week, the Indians are coming next week, and the Chinese practically live here. As I have learned in the past year, we are not doing enough as a country, as a government, as a Congress to promote investments and to see this opportunity for what it is.

Well, others have seen the opportunity and have seized it. Just to pick one, China has actually exceeded the United States in terms of its total amount of exports to Africa of just a few short years ago. It has rocketed past us. The amount of foreign direct investment, the amount of export and import sales between China and Africa has grown dramatically. In fact, it has grown far more rapidly than the United States. Even though we have longstanding and positive relationships, I fear we will wake up and discover that China has secured long-term contracts that lock in their interests for decades and lock out American companies, American employers, and American interests.

The World Bank recently predicted Africa is on the verge of a takeoff, much as we saw happen in the Pacific Rim or in India or in Central America over the last 20 years. In my view, we have to engage now. When we grow our exports to parts of the world such as Africa, it grows American jobs and high-quality jobs. Every billion dollars in exports we send overseas supports another 5,000 U.S. jobs. Last year, U.S. exports overseas supported more than 7 million jobs.

I salute the initiative of the President and the Department of Commerce which are focused on trying to do more business with Africa, and to do it more wisely. But, frankly, we need to do more. So as chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa of the Foreign Relations Committee, along with my friend and partner in the last Congress, Senator JOHNNY ISAKSON of Georgia, I convened a series of hearings to focus on U.S. economic statecraft in Africa, to gather data, to have conversations, and to learn the facts about what we need to do to be more competitive.

I have released a report today called “Embracing Africa’s Economic Potential,” which offers concrete recommendations to the U.S. Government—actions we can take right now, often in partnership with our private sector and with African governments, to strengthen our trade relationship between the United States and the countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Anyone interested can download a copy at coons.senate.gov/africa. Our report makes six recommendations, none of which involves spending a single dime of additional taxpayer money. In fact, it recommends ways to use what money we already spend on exploring and expanding into the market of Africa more efficiently and more effectively. So let’s look at the recommendations in the report.

First, it suggests we work with our African partners to remove barriers to trade. Trade is impeded in Africa by everything from poor governance, unreliable infrastructure, complex tariffs, to corruption. There are solutions the United States has already offered and there are efforts already underway by American businesses in partnership with our African partners. In particular, USAID has set up regional trade hubs that have done great work in breaking through barriers to growing regional trade. But we can and should do more.

Second, reauthorize and strengthen the African Growth and Opportunity Act, better known as AGOA, in advance of its expiration in 2015. This legislation has been hugely successful in promoting African exports into the American market and in building mutually reinforcing relationships between the United States and the continent. I think we can do even more to create jobs both in the United States and Africa by diversifying products covered by AGOA, by improving its utilization by African countries, by ensuring its benefits are mutually beneficial between our country and Africa, and by not waiting until the 11th hour to act on reauthorization.

Senator ISAKSON, and many in this Chamber, worked very hard to secure reauthorization of the third country fabric provision of AGOA last year, but it took longer than it should have and it was more difficult than it needed to be. It is my hope, working together with colleagues here and in the House, we can get a jump on this in advance of 2015.

The third recommendation is to improve coordination between the many U.S. Government agencies working on trade policy to develop a comprehensive strategy for investment in sub-Saharan Africa. As many as 10 different Federal agencies are responsible for parts of trade policy and international development. So making sure they are working together efficiently is a good way for us to ensure success.

Fourth, we need to increase the presence of the U.S. Foreign Commercial Service in critical areas in the region.

This chart shows those countries that have the fastest growing economies, and these are the few places where we have representatives from USAID or from the Department of Commerce.

In short, my point is there are many countries that have strongly growing economies where we have no representation. We have, in fact, zero U.S. Foreign Commercial Service officers in five of the six countries listed here as having the fastest growing economies. In fact, we only have six officers in all of sub-Saharan Africa, compared with significantly higher numbers in Asia and elsewhere.

I am concerned the reason for this is that Commerce isn’t forward looking in its resource allocation and doesn’t see the scale of the opportunities in Africa. Although I was grateful that Acting Secretary Blank made a trade mission trip to Africa late last year, that was the first time in a decade a U.S. Secretary of Commerce had made a visit to the continent, and there is much more we need to do.

Our fifth recommendation is to bolster support for the agencies that finance and support U.S. commercial engagement overseas, particularly in Africa. These agencies, the Export-Import Bank—known as Ex-Im—and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, known as OPIC—issue political risk insurance and help with financing, particularly financing to markets where they don’t yet have a robust banking sector and where the rule of law is less certain. These agencies are smart investments that actually generate real returns for American taxpayers and contribute to the bottom line for the American Federal Government.

Our sixth and last recommendation is to engage the community of African-born individuals who now live in the United States—the so-called diaspora communities—to strengthen economic ties. Who better to serve as an American representative of the system, and who better to take on the spirit of entrepreneurship and penetrate African markets than those born, raised, or connected to African countries and who have been educated in the United States and have been successful here and now have the resources and opportunity to reconnect with their countries of origin or the countries of their families. We can and must do more to strengthen these resources, and I was pleased to get a chance to speak at the second annual diaspora conference hosted by the Department of State last year. It is my hope we will invest further in this untapped resource—something that distinguishes the United States from our competitors in other parts of the world who do not have the blessing of a strong diaspora community as we do.

So in short, each of these six recommendations will get us closer to our goal of a more vibrant, a faster growing and more sustainable U.S.-Africa trade relationship. But the key to im-

plementing these recommendations in an integrated way is to listen to each other, to embrace them, and move forward across the several committees of jurisdiction, across the 10 different Federal agencies and entities, and to develop a coordinated plan for taking advantage of this remarkable part of the world that can also grow American jobs.

We have an opportunity to seize this moment and to promote economic engagement, to strengthen the American economy and to advance the values of freedom and democracy around the world. Make no mistake, though, today we are falling short. We are failing to grasp this opportunity as strongly and clearly as our competitors are. We can act on a number of smart legislative proposals, including the Increasing American Jobs Through Greater Exports to Africa Act, which I cosponsored in the last Congress along with Senators DURBIN and BOZEMAN, and which I hope we will reintroduce shortly to establish a comprehensive U.S. strategy for public-private investment, trade, and development in sub-Saharan Africa. At the same time, the administration can, and I hope will, do more to coordinate strategy and use our resources effectively.

The report we have issued today I hope will be seen as a wake-up call. If we fail, we will wake up 10 years from now and we will see jobs and opportunities we might have grasped taken by our competitors. It is my hope we will not watch these opportunities pass us by but will, instead, take advantage of this remarkable moment and this great opportunity.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I would like to add to the remarks I made a moment ago about climate change to respond to some statements that have been made recently on the Senate floor on this subject.

As those of us who are advocates in the cause of doing something about climate change know, the polluters and their advocates have an advantage: They only have to create doubt, they only have to create debate in order to create delay and allow the polluters to continue making money at the expense of the rest of us. That means the arguments, frankly, don’t have to be true; they just have to be made. Then they can say there is still debate, then they can say there is still controversy, both of which are self-fulfilling prophecies.