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**Obama Administration Officials Release Progress Report on Work of
Climate Change Adaptation Task Force**

WASHINGTON – Today, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) released an interim progress report of the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force. The report outlines the Task Force’s progress to date and recommends key components to include in a national strategy on climate change adaptation. The components include: integration of science into adaptation decisions and policy; communications and capacity building; coordination and collaboration; prioritization; a flexible framework for Agencies; and evaluation.

“The Administration believes we must prepare for the inevitable effects of climate change,” said Nancy Sutley, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. “We know that climate-related changes are already observed in the United States. The Federal Government must adapt and improve resilience to minimize risk to people, natural places, and key infrastructure. Adaptation will require thoughtful, preventative actions and investments, and demand new approaches and preparation from nonprofit, private and government entities.”

“The impacts of climate change are closely tied to our economy and national security; they affect all aspects of our society and ecosystems. This inter-agency effort will deliver on the President's promise to base decisions on good science,” said Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D., Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator. “This Task Force is focused on enhancing the resilience of the natural environment, the built environment and human institutions to climate change and ocean acidification.”

“Effective policy demands the latest and best scientific information,” said Shere Abbott, Associate Director for Energy and Environment in the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. “To this end, the Administration is strengthening the U.S. Global Change Research Program to support evidence-based actions aimed at adapting to climate change, even as we work to mitigate the effects of climate change and deepen our understanding of its consequences for human well-being and ecosystems.”

In 2009, CEQ, OSTP and NOAA initiated the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force, which includes representatives from more than 20 Federal Agencies. When President Obama signed the Executive Order focused on Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance on October 5, 2009, he called on the Task Force to develop, within one year, Federal recommendations for adapting to climate change impacts both domestically and internationally.

In October of 2010, the Task Force will report to the President on the development of domestic and international dimensions of a U.S. approach to climate change adaptation and what Federal Agencies are doing to support this effort. The Task Force also will recommend additional aspects to consider in the development of a comprehensive national strategy.

Federal Adaptation Planning

There is substantial activity underway in the U.S. to adapt to climate change and build resilience. Several States, cities and counties have begun to assess risks and develop adaptation strategies. The Federal Government also is taking action. However, the Task Force has determined that significant gaps in the U.S. Government's approach to this effort remain. To address these gaps, the Task Force identified the need to develop the following:

- A unified strategic vision and approach
- An understanding of the challenges at all levels of government
- Organized and coordinated efforts across local, State and Federal agencies
- Strong links between, and support and participation of, Tribal, regional, State, and local partners
- Coherent research programs to identify and describe regional impacts
- Relevant climate change and impact information that is accessible to and usable by decision-makers and practitioners on the ground
- Comprehensive and localized risk and vulnerability assessments
- A strategy to link resources, both financial and intellectual, to critical needs
- A robust approach to evaluating and applying lessons learned

The Task Force seeks to address these gaps and recognizes that adaptation and resilience will require a set of thoughtful, preventative actions and investments, and will demand new approaches and preparation from all segments of society. To promote this, the Task Force determined a national strategy should address at a minimum the following six components:

- 1. Science Inputs to Adaptation Decisions and Policy.** The Task Force may recommend approaches for coordinating, developing, distributing and integrating science, from physical to socioeconomic, into all aspects of adaptation.
- 2. Communications and Capacity-building.** The Task Force may develop recommendations for communicating climate change impacts, adaptation, and resilience and for building capacity within the U.S. Government, including prioritizing opportunities for additional training and resources.
- 3. Coordination and Collaboration.** The Task Force may develop recommendations for structuring the national adaptation strategy within the Federal Government and for increasing and improving coordination and collaboration across the Government and with partners.
- 4. Prioritization.** The Task Force may consider and make recommendations for how to identify priorities. The Task Force has begun work on several areas that may require a coordinated government response, and is developing recommendations for water resource management and for international adaptation and resilience. The Task Force will add additional areas as it continues its work.
- 5. A Flexible Framework for Agencies.** Adapting to climate change and building resilience requires planning within and across agencies. There is no single planning approach appropriate for all agencies, but each should use a consistent framework to facilitate coordination and allow agencies to leverage common tools and methods. The Task Force may implement agency pilots to further develop and test the framework, and will continue to develop recommendations on the common tools required to support implementation.
- 6. Evaluation.** Adaptation plans must allow for a "feedback" mechanism, whereby new information, lessons learned, and modified priorities can be incorporated into ongoing adaptation processes. Evaluation and lessons learned will help provide clear guidance for decision-making that enhances adaptation and resiliency. The Task Force may develop recommendations for how to evaluate the success of adaptation and resilience-building efforts.

In preparing its October 2010 report, the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force will refine recommendations around structural issues like improving the integration of science into policy development and developing a framework for Federal Agency adaptation. It also will continue to work on cross-cutting topics like water resources management and international adaptation. The Task Force will establish additional workgroups, including those to inform the national strategy in the areas of communications, coordination and collaboration across government and with partners, evaluation, and other priority issues.

In addition, the Task Force will hold a series of regional outreach meetings, conduct pilot activities, and accept public comment on its interim progress report for 60 days on the CEQ website at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/ceq/initiatives/adaptation>.