

# Obama calls for carbon capture push

## US President in move to work with Canada to cut emissions

BLAKE WRIGHT  
Houston

US PRESIDENT Barack Obama has called for co-operation between the United States and Canada on the development of carbon capture and storage technology.

Obama's aim is to minimise the impact of large-scale hydrocarbon production — such as the massive Canadian oil sands and America's coal projects — on the environment.

Obama's recent stimulus package earmarks billion of dollars to the advancement of clean energy technology, including incentives for maturing carbon sequestration techniques.

"What we know is that oil sands creates a big carbon footprint," Obama told the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

"So the dilemma that Canada faces, the United States faces, and China and the entire world faces, is how do we obtain the energy that we need to grow our economies in a way that is not rapidly accelerating climate change?"

Obama was due to travel to Canada at press time — his first trip abroad as President — and meet with Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

The topic of energy security and the environment is high on their list of topics to discuss.

"I think to the extent that Canada and the United States can collaborate on ways that we can sequester carbon, capture greenhouse gases before they're emitted into the atmosphere, that's going to be good for everybody," said Obama.

The Canadian oil sands continues to be a stable, reliable source of oil for the US, but the nature



Foreign visit: Barack Obama is expected to discuss energy issues with Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper Photo: AFP/SCANPIX

of the massive mining operations runs counter to the new administration's plans for a clean, green energy future.

Canada currently produces about 1.2 million barrels of oil per day from its oil sands operations — a figure expected to grow to near 3.5 million barrels over the next ten years.

## Uganda Cabinet reshuffled

UGANDA head of state Yoweri Museveni has completed his long-awaited Cabinet reshuffle ahead of moves within the ruling National Resistance Movement to pick its presidential candidate for the 2011 elections, writes Barry Morgan.

Kampala's new Energy & Minerals Minister is professional hydrologist Hillary Onek, who has moved across from the agriculture portfolio.

Observers in Uganda said the decision is a result of Museveni's disapproval of the previous Energy & Minerals

Minister Daudi Migereko's low hydropower generation estimate for the proposed rehabilitation of the Karuma dam.

Migereko was not moved out of government entirely but has been effectively demoted to become Chief Whip, apparently with a view to uniting waverers among the party faithful.

Having already had a crack at the oil portfolio, another former Energy & Minerals Minister, Syda Bbumba, has now become Finance Minister — the first woman to hold this position.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Saharawi must decide on Western Sahara

UPSTREAM'S coverage of Moroccan oil exploration in Western Sahara points out the dilemma that it is a territory which is treated by the United Nations as an unresolved colonial issue, and an area under occupation.

In the 30 January edition of Upstream, Calvin Dark of the US-based Moroccan lobby bureau Moroccan American Center for Policy, in seeking to correct some "false and misleading statements" in your coverage, unfortunately makes a series of errors of his own.

Dark claims that the UN considers Morocco as Administrative Authority over Western Sahara, and that the Moroccan oil search in Western Sahara is legal since it is to the benefit of the people of the territory. His arguments are taken out of thin air.

Western Sahara Resource Watch, representing individuals and organisations in 30 countries, would like to clarify a few aspects of Dark's interpretation of international law.

- No state in the world recognises Morocco's claim to Western Sahara, a claim which is found groundless by the International Court of Justice. The UN condemned the 1975 Moroccan annexation of Western Sahara.
- Morocco is not recognised as the Administering Power of the territory. This was clearly confirmed by the UN legal office, in its much referred to 29 January 2002 Legal Opinion, paragraph 6. No agreement has ever legally transferred the administration of Western Sahara from Spain to Morocco, according to the UN.
- Had Morocco been the Administering Authority of Western Sahara, certain regulations would apply, such as not carrying

out natural resource exploration or exploitation unless it is respecting the wishes and interests of the people of the territory. But considering Morocco is not the Administering Power, as the author of the UN legal opinion, Hans Corell, has repeated, even stronger rules must be considered as to when natural resources activity can be considered legal.

"Any limitation of the powers of such entity acting in good faith would certainly apply a fortiori to an entity that did not qualify as an administering power but de facto administered the Territory", Corell said recently.

• It is not for Morocco to decide what is of the Saharawi people's benefit. According to the UN, the exploitation of natural resources can only take place if it is in accordance with the "wishes and interests" of the people in the territory.

Only the people in Western Sahara can decide this, not Morocco. Despite more than 100 UN resolutions calling for the Saharawis' right to self-determination, this right has still not been respected.

Western Sahara Resource Watch (WSRW) works to preserve the natural resources of Western Sahara for the Saharawi people.

These people are simply asking to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination endorsed by the United Nations.

WSRW believes it is time for the Saharawi people to settle the question of how they wish to be governed through the referendum which the UN calls for. Then it will be clear to companies with whom to deal.

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Western Sahara Resource Watch



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